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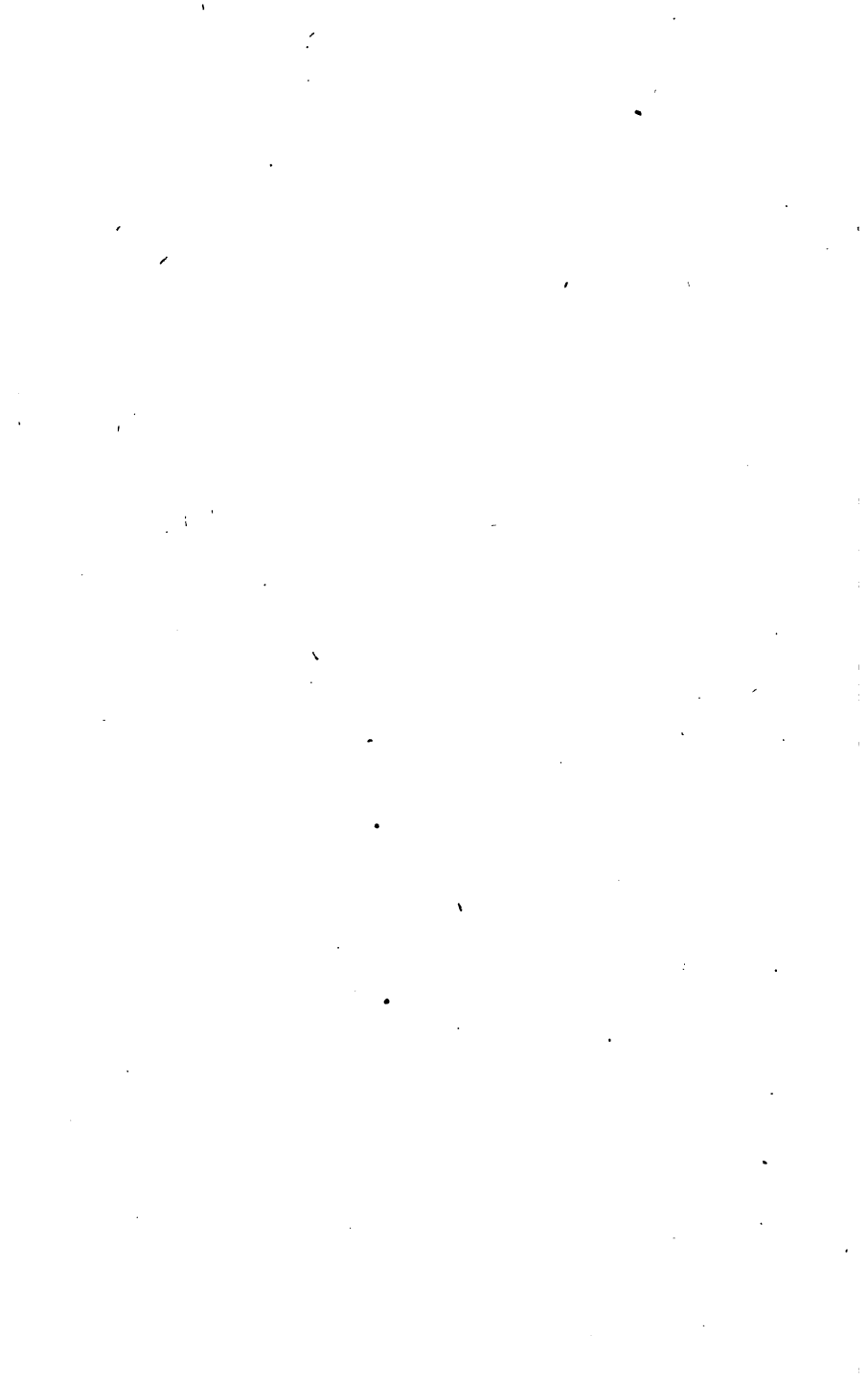
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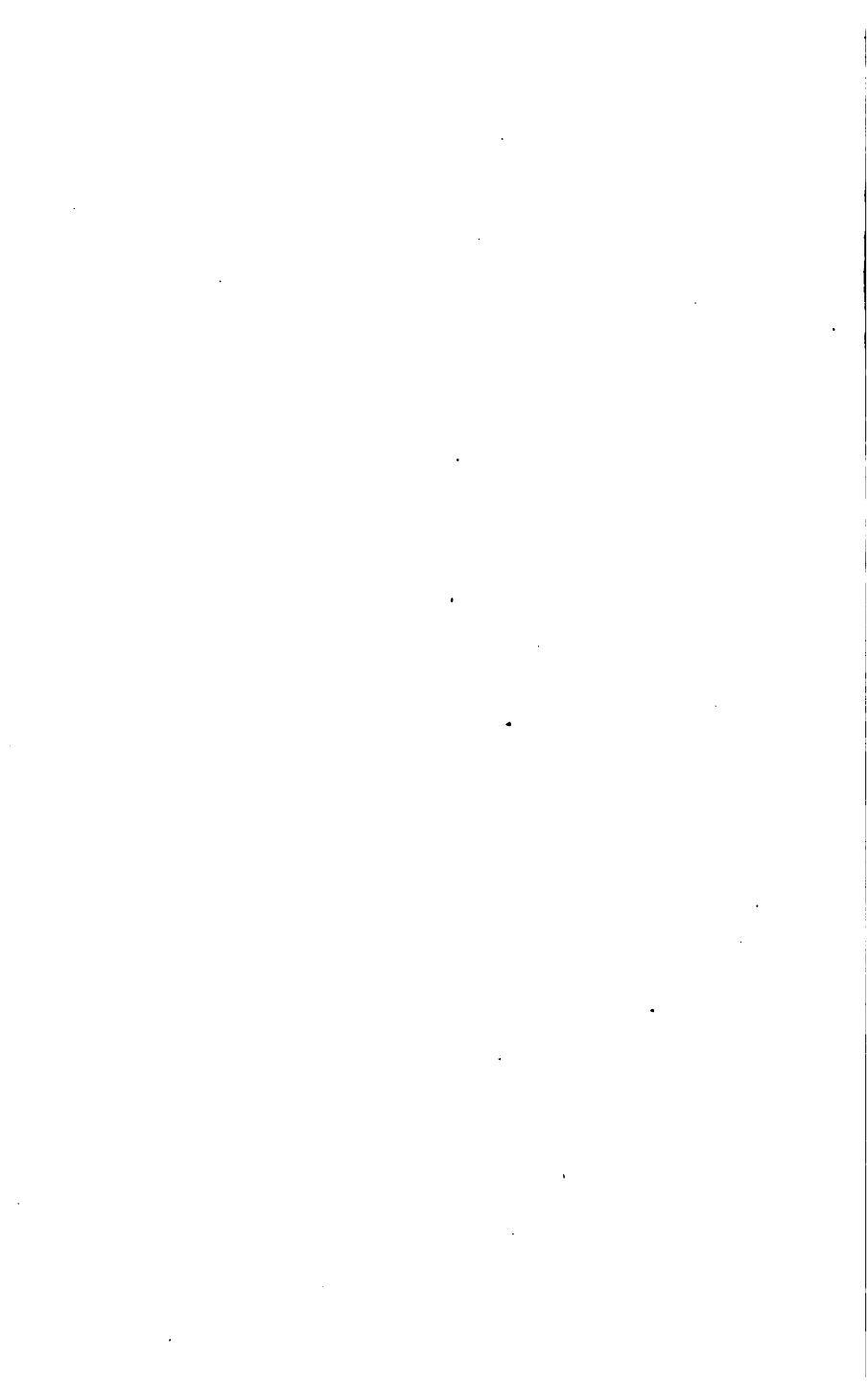
OF BOSTON

FOR BOOKS RELATING TO THE  
THEATRE









# The Commuters

JAMES FORBES



MUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York





# THE COMMUTERS

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY

JAMES FORBES

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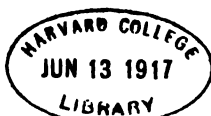
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## THE COMMUTERS.

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Originally produced at the Criterion Theatre,  
New York, August 15th, 1911. With the following  
cast:

NOTE:—The characters are arranged in the order  
in which they first speak.

LARRY BRICE.....	<i>Orrin Johnson</i>
HETTY BRICE.....	<i>May De Sousa</i>
CARRIE.....	<i>Georgie Lawrence</i>
MRS. GRAHAM.....	<i>Mrs. Pauline Duffield</i>
MR. ROLLISTON.....	<i>George Soule Spencer</i>
MR. COLTON.....	<i>John Cumberland</i>
MR. APPLEBEE.....	<i>E. Y. Backus</i>
SAMMY FLETCHER.....	<i>Taylor Holmes</i>
MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE...	<i>Maude Knowlton</i>
MRS. COLTON.....	<i>Amy Lesser</i>
MRS. SHIPMAN.....	<i>Isabelle Fenton</i>
MRS APPLEBEE.....	<i>Adelyn Wesley</i>
MRS. ROLLISTON .....	<i>Lillian Thurgate</i>
BARNES.....	<i>E. Y. Backus</i>

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## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

ACT I. Dining-room of the Brice home. Sat-  
urday morning 7:15.

ACT II. Living-room of the Brice home. Late  
afternoon of the same day.

ACT III. Same as ACT II. 2 A. M.

ACT IV. Veranda of the Brice home. Sunday  
morning.

TIME:—*The present.*

PLACE:—*A suburb of New York City*



# THE COMMUTERS

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## ACT I.

SCENE:—*The dining-room of the BRICE home.*

*It is a square room. The walls are panelled to a height of six feet with white painted wood. Above the panelling is a frieze of green and white flowered wall paper. At about R. 1 E. is a swing door to the kitchen, the backing for this door showing a wainscot of blue and white tile and yellow plaster walls. At R. 3 E. is a high casement window through which is shown an exterior backing in keeping with the drop. The valence and curtains on this window are of green linen. On the sill are pots of blooming plants. Underneath the window is a mahogany sideboard. On either end of it are silver candelabra, in the center are various pieces of silver such as a tea set, cake dishes, compotes, decanters, peppers and salts, a muffinier, and a silver cigarette box for cigarettes. Between the sideboard and the door at R. 1 E. is a small stand with telephone and a chair. At the rear of the stage are double French windows, recessed, and opening off stage, showing a green and white trellised fence covered with pink Rambler roses. Back of this is a drop representing the tree shaded lawns bordering a typical suburban street. In the recess of the windows is a platform raised one step from the stage. On each end of this platform is a flower stand filled with plants in bloom. Built in the flat back R.*

*and L. of these windows are practical cabinets with glass doors. On their shelves an assortment of glasses and gaily decorated china. At L. 2 E. leading into the living-room are double glass doors. Two chairs are placed against the wall above these doors and two below them. At center is a round mahogany table on which is a lace center-piece and a glass bowl of flowers. There is a chair L. of table and one R. of it. All the chairs are of mahogany, alike in design with the seats upholstered in green linen. Simple electric brackets with shades are on the walls L. and R. Before the curtains rises an alarm clock is heard off-stage L.*

*The curtain rises on an empty stage flooded with early morning light streaming through the case-ment window.*

*(Enter LARRY BRICE, carrying alarm-clock. It is ringing. He shakes it furiously.)*

LARRY. Oh, keep quiet, will you. *(Calls)* Hetty! Hetty!

HETTY. *(Entering R. with Herald and World)* Oh, Larry you're awake at last, are you?

LARRY. Fine chance I'd have to sleep with this burglar-alarm having hysterics. How do you fix the thing?

HETTY. *(Gives him papers; takes clock, turns off alarm)* I thought that one would get you up. It's a new one I bought yesterday. They call it the Commuter's Joy.

LARRY. The old one was joy enough. *(Lays HERALD on table—keeps World)*

HETTY. You were so used to that one it was a regular lullaby. LARRY *sits L. of C. table—HETTY puts clock on sideboard R.)* Now don't putter around. *(Down back of table—lays paper on chair R.)* It's seven-fifteen. You've just thirty minutes

5-17-22

to catch the 7:46. (*Takes flowers to sideboard*)

LARRY. Thirty-one minutes, pet. (*Reading World*)

HETTY. Just when did you come home last night? (*Down to table*)

LARRY. How late did you sit up?

HETTY. I asked a question. (*Picking up center-piece*)

LARRY. I heard you, dear heart, about ten minutes after eleven.

HETTY. You mean 10 *highballs* after eleven. (*HETTY puts center-piece over back of chair R. and goes to sideboard R. opens drawer*)

LARRY. Now, my dear, I was only——

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) Now don't tell me it was another impromptu alumni dinner. (*Takes out table-cloth*) I know that you were popular at college—(*Brings down table-cloth*) but I never heard of any other college with so many black hand societies. (*Spreading cloth*)

LARRY. Wrong, my love—quite wrong—it was just a little party at Sammy's.

HETTY. (*Still spreading cloth*) Sammy's! Another party at Sammy's. I wish to heaven that Mr. Samuel Fletcher was married, although he is an awful thing to wish on any woman. (*Smoothing cloth*)

LARRY. He always speaks well of you.

HETTY. He doesn't even know me.

LARRY. Perhaps that's the reason.

HETTY. I hate a man to be funny in the morning. (*Picks up center-piece*) The next time you see Mr. Fletcher just tell him for me that women would rather sit up with their husbands than for them. (*Puts center-piece on cloth*)

LARRY. Was his darling little girl lonely?

HETTY. No, his darling little girl wasn't lonely. Doctor Lloyd sat up with me.

LARRY. He did!



HETTY. Don't worry. He won't send a bill. It was a social not a professional call. Fan Rolliston came over. She was bored to tears too—(*Starts for sideboard*)

LARRY. Why?

HETTY. Why? (*Turns quickly and comes down R. C.*) Wasn't Rolliston at Sammy Fletcher's party?

LARRY. Was he? You should have heard him.

HETTY. (*Over to R. of table*) Spare me the reminiscences. I can see, it will be a long moist story and your train *leaves* at 7:46.

LARRY. (*Rises*) Oh, loads of time. (*Puts down World on L. of table and goes up to window C.*)

HETTY. (*Picks up HERALD, puts on R. of table—picking up World and crosses to L. C. looking at paper*) You told me that Mr. Rathborne was sailing at ten, and that you had to see him.

LARRY. Oh, what's the rush. (*Looks off R.*) Old Shipman's on the front porch reading his paper.

HETTY. What page?

LARRY. By his expression, I should say the death notices. (*Looks again*) No, it's the stock reports.

HETTY. (*Puts World on L. of table*) One of these fine mornings this whole street will be late for business. (*Goes to cabinet L. for bread-and-butter plates*)

LARRY. Oh, nonsense—old Shippy's never been known to miss a train, he keeps better time than the town clock.

HETTY. (*Bringing bread-and-butter plates L. of table*) You men are perfectly ridiculous, a lot of sheep. You wait for Shipman, Rolliston waits for you. Colton for Rolliston and Applebee for Colton—(*Puts down plates and goes back to L. cabinet for cups and saucers*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Just think of the sleep I miss in a year by not living further up the block.

HETTY. Oh, no, you'd stay out later. (*Taking two cups and saucers*)

LARRY. (*Looking down at lawn*) I guess I'll have to use mange cure on this lawn. (*Starts excitedly*) Someone's been on it. (*Turns to HETTY*) Were you?

HETTY. (*Coming down to table*) I've a perfect right to, but I never even look at it. (*Putting cups and saucers L.*)

LARRY. (*Coming down-stage to L. C.*) What's the use of my getting curvature of the spine trying to bring this lawn up in the way it should grow if everybody's going to walk on it. (*Picks up World angrily*)

HETTY. It might seem sarcastic but why don't you plant a few keep-off-the-grass signs. (*Laughs—goes to R. cabinet for two glasses*)

LARRY. How do you expect this grass to grow if you're going to laugh at it? (*HETTY comes down to table*) I wish you'd tell that maid of yours to keep off of it.

HETTY. (*Putting down glasses R. and L.*) I've given your positive instructions to Carrie. But, as she never does anything I tell her to—

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) I'll talk to her, where is she? (*Throws paper on chair L. of table*)

HETTY. Late as usual. (*Up to R. cabinet for plates*)

LARRY. (*Down L. a little*) What do you expect, allowing a maid to sleep at home?

HETTY. It's such a relief to have a maid that I don't care where she sleeps. (*Takes plates*) I'd even let her sleep on the lawn.

LARRY. I'd like to see her try it. Why do you keep a girl who's always late?

HETTY. (*R. of table, placing the plates*) Do you suppose I like it? (*Puts down first plate*) I have to take what I can get in the way of servants and be thankful. (*Puts down second plate*) Why

should you grumble? I never say anything. Although it is I who ~~has~~ to be up early every other morning in time to get breakfast—make the fires—  
(Starts for sideboard R.)

LARRY. (Interrupting) Is there any hot water?

HETTY. You should have stayed at home and shaved last night. You haven't time now. (Goes to sideboard R. and gets knives, forks and spoons)

LARRY. I can't go into town looking like this.

HETTY. (Brings down knives and forks to R. of table) The men won't mind and any woman who has to take the 7:46 doesn't care what any man looks like.

(LARRY looks at her, starts to speak then exits furiously L. HETTY watches him off laughs then begins placing the knives and forks.)

LARRY. (Off-stage L., very pleasantly) Good-morning, Carrie—

(Enter CARRIE L. very leisurely, utterly undisturbed by the fact that she is late, that her mistress is setting the table.)

CARRIE. (Languidly, standing L.) Oh, ma'am, is breakfast ready?

HETTY. (Sarcastically) I'm sorry it's a few moments' late. (HETTY pauses momentarily expecting CARRIE to come to her assistance. But CARRIE is removing slowly the hat pins from her hat. HETTY resumes laying the knives and forks, etc. Very sarcastically) Which excuse is it this morning? Is your mother ill? Did you have the toothache all night? Did you have to get your little brother off to school? (Up to sideboard R. of muffinier)

CARRIE. No'm, I just slep' in. (Taking off hat)

HETTY. (Back to table with muffinier) I'm

sorry you didn't have time to comb your hair. (*Up to cabinet R. for finger-bowls*)

CARRIE. Why, it took me a half hour! Don't you like my Turban swirl?

HETTY. (*Coming down with finger-bowls*) What's that in your hair?

CARRIE. That's my cap——

HETTY. Where are the ones I gave you? (*Placing finger-bowls L. and R.*)

CARRIE. They ain't becomin'. Don't you like this? I think it's awful cute. It's what I used to wear at Child's.

HETTY. Child's is hardly setting the fashion for Auburn Manor. (*Up to sideboard for salts and peppers*)

CARRIE. If you expect me to wear one of them with streamers, I quits. It's this or none.

HETTY. We'll dispense with caps—(*Coming down to table, puts salts and peppers L. and R.*)

CARRIE. What?

HETTY. Take it off, please——

CARRIE. Oh!

(*HETTY goes up to R. cabinet for sugar bowl and bell.*)

HETTY. And while I think of it, I want you to remember that people calling at this house, company, you understand, must be announced—(*Comes back to table*)

CARRIE. (*Interrupting*) No one gets by me——

HETTY. (*Putting down bowl and bell*) Yesterday, while I was shampooing my hair, you showed in a strange man——

CARRIE. (*Interrupting*) Well, the plumber ain't company, is he?

HETTY. It doesn't matter who they are, they must be announced.

CARRIE. (*Glancing over table*) Ain't you usin' napkins, no more?

HETTY. Thanks—(*Goes to sideboard and gets napkins*) And it isn't necessary for you to entertain my friends either. Mrs. Rolliston called the other day and when I came downstairs I found you sitting in there conversing with her. (*Places napkins R. and L.*)

CARRIE. Well, she was kickin' to me about the way maw done Mr. Rolliston's shirts.

HETTY. Quite right, I must speak to your mother myself. (*Starts for kitchen R.*) She's using altogether too much blueing.

CARRIE. (*Coming c. front of table*) That's what I tell her. My shirtwaists is a sight.

HETTY. (*Stops*) We won't discuss your shirtwaists. (*Starts*) And remember you must not talk with people when they call. (*Goes a little further*)

CARRIE. We cut maw's customers and hurt her trade. I don't want people to think I'm stuck up cause I don't chase their wash to them no more.

HETTY. People, aren't thinking about you. (*HETTY exits R. into kitchen*)

CARRIE. (*c. front of table*) I wish I was back to "Childs'." All the customers so nice and friendly (*Starts R.*)

LARRY. (*From off L.*) Say, where's my shirt?

CARRIE. How should I know? (*Over near kitchen door. Calls MRS. BRICE*) Mrs. Brice, your husband's yelling for you—(*Exits R.*)

(*HETTY enters R. with two plates with fruit.*)

LARRY. (*Off L.*) Where's my tan shirt?

HETTY. (*Going to table and placing fruit R. and L.*) Aren't you dressed yet?

LARRY. How can I dress without a shirt?

HETTY. Where did you put it?

LARRY. Where I always put it. What did you do with it?

HETTY. I don't wear your clothes. Look on the back of the door. (*Runs up to window*) Did you find it?

LARRY. Yes.

HETTY. You'd better hurry. (*Coming down to R.*) Shippy has finished the front page. (*Exits quickly R. Telephone rings*)

CARRIE. (*Enters with pitcher of water. Telephone is ringing*) Shut up. (*Rings again*) Oh, wait a minute. (*Pouring water in finger-bowls and glasses*) Give a fellow a chance. (*Slams pitcher on table crosses to telephone and snatches off receiver angrily*) Hello, yes, this is Mr. Brice's house. Who? Mrs. Shipman's maid. Are you the new one? Going to stay? yes, Auburn Manor is awful dull. Ain't a moving pitcher show in the place. What? you want me to tell Mr. Brice, Mr. Shipman ain't feeling well—ain't going to town to-day. Aw right. Say, what's your name? Margaret? Mine's Caroline. I've been here three days. I'll come over to-night. Yes, I'll bring my gentleman friend. Good-bye, Maggie—

LARRY. (*Off L.*) Where's my coat?

(*HETTY enters R. with covered dish of toast.*)

CARRIE. (*Down to her*) Now he's yapping for his coat—(*Exits R.*)

LARRY. (*Enters from L. with pair of shoes in hand*) Where's my coat?

HETTY. (*Puts down toast*) Where did you have it last?

LARRY. (*Crossing to R. of table*) Wore it Thursday. I remember I took it off Thursday night when I was watering the lawn. (*Sits R. of table*)

HETTY. Isn't it upstairs? (*Going L.*)

LARRY. Not unless you stuck it away somewhere. (HETTY *exits* L. LARRY *putting on shoes, tying laces*) Can't put anything down in this house, somebody's always picking it up. (CARRIE *enters* R. *with tray with coffee, milk, and cream, places it on L. end of table*) Wish my things could be left alone. (*Finishing tying shoes*)

CARRIE. I never touch 'em. (*Exits* R. *with water-pitcher*. HETTY *enters* L. *with LARRY'S coat and hat—puts hat on chair above door—brings coat to him above table—he takes it*)

LARRY. Where was it?

HETTY. On the door of the coat closet. (*Crosses to L. of table*)

LARRY. You're always hanging everything up. (*Throws coat on back of his chair, fixes his tie and putting in scarf-pin*) This tie looks like the devil with this shirt.

HETTY. (*Pouring coffee*) Oh, don't be fussy. Who's going to look at your tie? Hurry up and drink your coffee. (*Brings it to him front of table*)

LARRY. I will not be hounded to death in my own house. (*Snatches cup from her and places it on table—gets coat on*) No eggs? (*Coat half on and looking at table*)

HETTY. You haven't time for eggs. (LARRY *sits*, HETTY *goes up* L.)

LARRY. Not even scrambled?

HETTY. No.

(LARRY *sits and shoves his plate around, HETTY is looking for something.*)

LARRY. Why don't you sit down and eat your breakfast?

HETTY. I can't eat with walking nervous prostration. Don't you realize your boss sailing at ten and you have to see him. Where are your shoes? (*Looking under chairs over* L.)

LARRY. I had them when I came in. (*Putting sugar in coffee, picks up Herald.* HETTY looking around for them, sees them on LARRY)

HETTY. You have them on.

LARRY. You get me so upset in the morning. This commuting business is wearing me out. (*Props up paper against glass*)

HETTY. What about me?

LARRY. (*Shaking sugar out of muffinier on fruit*) Living out here in Yapville when we might be in a cozy Harlem flat having some comforts and an egg once in a while. (*Slaps muffinier down angrily. Fixes paper against muffinier*)

HETTY. Who made my life miserable, wishing he had a little place with a garden? (*LARRY reads paper*) And now that you have it (*Takes up paper from chair, puts it on table*) instead of planting it, you sit up all night with Sammy Fletcher sowing a lovely crop of wild oats. (*Sits L. of table*)

(*Enter MRS. GRAHAM, from L.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-morning, children.

HETTY. Good-morning.

(*Rises, goes to her kisses her.*)

LARRY. (*Rises*) Hello, Mater—(*They kiss, he gets chair from L. above door and places it for her at back of table*) Where are you going?

MRS. GRAHAM. To town.

HETTY. What for? (*Sits*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Not a thing. Just shopping. I'm going on the 7:46 and I thought I'd stop for dear Larry. (*Sitting back of table, LARRY takes her coat and hangs it on the back of her chair and goes R.*)

HETTY. You'd better run right along, mother. (*Gets muffinier*) Larry won't make it if he doesn't stop sulking and eat his breakfast.



LARRY. (*Standing R. of MRS. GRAHAM*) I'm not sulking.

MRS. GRAHAM. Come, come, children.

LARRY. Well, she won't give me any eggs.

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, give the boy his eggs.

HETTY. (*Putting muffinier down*) He hasn't time. Mr. Rathbone is sailing—

LARRY. (*Interrupting in sing-song voice*) At ten and I must see him. (*Sits R. of table. HETTY is eating fruit*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Looking at watch*) There's lots of time. (*Looks at clock on sideboard*) My dear, your clock's crazy. It's ten minutes fast.

LARRY. (*Looking sternly at HETTY*) Can't even keep the clock right. I might have had ten minutes more in bed. (*HETTY still eating fruit*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Poor Larry. (*LARRY rings bell on table*)

HETTY. Poor Larry! No one thinks of me. I've been up since the screech of dawn.

(*CARRIE enters R.*)

LARRY. (*Eating fruit*) Eggs?

CARRIE. How many?

LARRY. About a peck.

HETTY. (*Severely*) How do you wish them prepared?

LARRY. Fried'll do. (*Looking at CARRIE*)

CARRIE. I'll slip you mine—they're frying now—(*Exits R.*)

(*LARRY and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.*)

HETTY. You're spoiling Carrie. I want you to be very severe with her—

CARRIE. (*Puts her head in the door like a Child's waitress*) Two on the pan, sunny side up or sunny side down?

LARRY. What?

CARRIE. Will you have 'em turned?

LARRY. Rare, please——

(CARRIE giggles and exits—LARRY and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.)

HETTY. Is that what you call being severe? You're like all the other men. They kick to their wives but haven't the moral courage to say anything to a servant.

MRS. GRAHAM. Now, Hetty, you mustn't talk like that to Larry. The morning's no time to scold a man.

HETTY. (*Putting aside her fruit plate*) There you go. What's the use of trying to train my husband if my own mother spoils it all by petting him? (*Using finger-bowl*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Now Hetty, you know I never interfere but dear Larry has always been the best of sons to me and a good son, you know——

LARRY. Makes a good husband—(*Hands empty coffee cup to HETTY*)

HETTY. Time was when I was of some importance in my own family. My feelings were considered—(*Pouring coffee*) but, the King can do no wrong—(*Passing coffee to MRS. GRAHAM who gives it to LARRY*) Mother's quite right, of course, and I'm very, very sorry to have asked you to do what you should do without my asking.

(CARRIE enters quickly with covered dish of fried eggs—she places eggs near LARRY, takes up his empty fruit plate—Comes back of MRS. GRAHAM and takes up HETTY's fruit plate and as HETTY is about to take cream pitcher CARRIE pantomimes "No" and takes the pitcher.)

CARRIE. There's just enough cream for Mr.

Brice. (*Crosses back to LARRY and places it for him, smiling at him*)

HETTY. There was half a pint this morning. What became of it?

CARRIE. (*Fruit plate in each hand*) The cat got it.

LARRY. (*Who has started to pour cream—stops*) Milk for mine. (*Puts it down*)

CARRIE. What's the matter with it? Jeannette's a perfectly clean cat. (*CARRIE flounces out of the room R.*)

HETTY. I can't stand this life another minute—(*Turns front in chair—begins to cry*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Why, Hetty!

HETTY. This everlasting servant difficulty's gotten on my nerves. I guess I'm a failure at house-keeping.

LARRY. Well, it's taken you two years to find it out. (*Puts milk in coffee*)

HETTY. (*To MRS. GRAHAM*) How can you sit there like a stoking bottle and hear your child abused? My failure thrown in my teeth.

LARRY. I didn't mean it that way. (*Puts pitcher down*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Passing milk to HETTY*) No, Hetty, he didn't mean it that way.

HETTY. (*Taking up pitcher of milk*) Allow me to understand my own husband. (*Puts milk in coffee*)

LARRY. (*Rising*) Why you're a bully little housekeeper. Mater, haven't I always said she was a corker?

MRS. GRAHAM. Of course, Larry, you have criticised the cooking——

(*LARRY crosses back from MRS. GRAHAM to her L.*)

HETTY. There, you see, you talk about me behind

my back to my own family and—(To MRS. GRAHAM) still you take his part.

MRS. GRAHAM. Larry, do I ever show the slightest partiality?

HETTY. I'm sure I wear my fingers to the bone. (Turning front cries again)

LARRY. (L. of her) Dear little soft fingers— (Puts arm around her)

HETTY. They're not. Look where I burnt myself yesterday cooking your old pudding.

LARRY. We'll kiss it and make it well. (Kisses her finger)

(MRS. GRAHAM rises and starts to tiptoe off R.)

HETTY. (Pouting) I don't care—(She sees her mother tiptoeing out of the room) Mother, what are you doing?

LARRY. Say the word. Hetty, and I'll go out and fire Carrie on the spot. (Goes back of HETTY quickly R. C.)

HETTY. And who'll do the breakfast dishes?

MRS. GRAHAM. (Over R.) Isn't that just like a man? You two finish your breakfast, I'll go out and say a few words to Carrie

HETTY. Oh, mother, be careful, she'll quit if you look at her.

MRS. GRAHAM. Stuff and nonsense! I've had twenty servants since I've lived in Auburn Manor and I've done worse than look at them. (Exits R.)

(LARRY returns to R. of table and sits.)

HETTY. I'm sorry that I was nasty, Larry. But, oh, these servants!

LARRY. (Taking eggs out of dish) Now don't jump on me, but do you think you treat them right?

HETTY. (*Angry, but controlling herself*) What do you mean, dear?

LARRY. You know, after all, they're human beings——

HETTY. (*Turning and speaking quickly*) I try earnestly to remember that. (*Takes a piece of toast*)

LARRY. They must lead rather lonesome lives. (*Takes a piece of toast*) I think you ought to take a little interest in their affairs. Be kind to them. Give them little amusements. There's something wrong somewhere. (*Eating*) Now, we have no trouble with our stenographers. (*Fixing eggs*)

HETTY. Oh, so you take a little interest in them, and give them little amusements. (*LARRY tries to protest with mouth full of food*) Well, I can't go round my house making eyes at my maid, and chucking her under the chin.

LARRY. I don't chuck my stenographer under the chin. There isn't a chin in the office worth chucking. (*Eating again*) Nice way to talk about me. You know I haven't eyes for any woman but you.

HETTY. Then why don't you stay at home and look at me? (*Takes a piece of toast*)

LARRY. Listen to her! You'd think I neglected her.

HETTY. Well, you weren't home, last night, were you?

LARRY. Neither was Rolliston.

HETTY. He's been married longer and it's more excusable.

LARRY. Fan would like to hear that.

HETTY. It's Fan's affair, I've my own troubles. We've been out here only a year and you've stayed in town four nights.

LARRY. Three at the most.

HETTY. Four. I counted them last night. I have them marked on the calendar. *Four red letter nights.* (*Counting on her fingers*)

LARRY. (*Takes up paper and begins to read*)  
Do you want a man to give up his men friends?

HETTY. No, but you ought to give up Sammy Fletcher. Four nights! It's terrible. You're getting tired of me. (*Begins to cry*)

LARRY. (*Looks at her—puts down paper*) Oh, Hetty, tired of you. I just live and work for you. You know that. (*Rises and crosses back to her L.*) Why, you're more to me than all the friends in the world. There isn't one in the whole blooming lot that matters along side of you.

HETTY. Not even Sammy?

LARRY. Sammy to the ash-heap.

HETTY. Oh, I wouldn't have you give him up for the world, only you won't see him again for a long time—will you?

LARRY. Not for a month of Sundays. (*Puts arm around her*)

HETTY. Well, you're a real nice boy and you may kiss me. (*LARRY kisses her*)

ROLLISTON. (*Appears at window c.*) Here, here, if you kids want to spoon, pull down the blinds.

LARRY. Say, get off the lawn! (*Running up to L. of c. window*)

ROLLISTON. Lawn: where?

LARRY. You're standing on it, saphead. There are doors to this house, use them.

ROLLISTON. Oh, don't get sore about a couple of blades of grass. (*He disappears around the house R.*)

LARRY. (*Calling after him*) It's easy for you to talk. You haven't watched them like a father. I'll nail this window—(*Coming down to table*)

HETTY. Why, we'll smother.

ROLLISTON. (*Off-stage R.*) Good-morning, Mrs. Graham.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Off-stage R.*) Good-morning, Mr. Rolliston.

(LARRY sits R. of table.)

CARRIE. (*Off-stage*) You can't go in. You gotta to be announced. (*Appears at the door, barring the entrance of ROLLISTON*) Mr. Rolliston's calling.

HETTY. Don't be absurd, Carrie. Come in Rollie.

(ROLLISTON enters followed by MRS. GRAHAM who gets chair at R. brings it down R. C. and sits.)

CARRIE. No matter what you do in this house, you're in bad—(*Exits*)

ROLLISTON. (*Runs up to window and looks off L.*) I hope Fan didn't see me.

HETTY. Why?

ROLLISTON. I started to make the 7:23, missed it. Fan said I would, so I sneaked in here by the back way. I don't want her to have the pleasure of saying, "I told you so."

HETTY. You men are all alike. You'll both miss the 7:46 if you aren't careful.

ROLLISTON. Oh, lots of time. Shippy is on the porch. (*Looks off R.*)

LARRY. (*Takes another piece of toast*) Don't mind Hetty, she's nervous this morning. Had me up ten minutes too soon.

ROLLISTON. Grounds for a divorce. Any jury of commuters will give you a verdict. (*Comes down L. and puts hat on chair L. below door L.*)

HETTY. Mr. Rathborn is sailing at ten and Larry must see him before he goes. (*Turning to ROLLISTON*) What pleasure do you men derive from running for trains?

ROLLISTON. Great for the circulation.

(LARRY, ROLLISTON and MRS. GRAHAM laugh.)

HETTY. I don't think that's a bit funny.

ROLLISTON. What's killed your sense of humor?

HETTY. Early rising. (*Looks at LARRY*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Now, Hetty. (*To ROLLISTON*)  
How is Mrs. Rolliston?

ROLLISTON. Well—but some peevish. (*Stroking his face*)

HETTY. I don't wonder, you staying out all night.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Oh, Hetty.  
(*To ROLLISTON*) How is Rolliston second?

(*LARRY and HETTY glare at MRS. GRAHAM.*)

ROLLISTON. Bobby? (*Coming back of table*)  
Oh, he's great. He is certainly one wonder kid.  
Heard his latest?

(*LARRY, HETTY and MRS. GRAHAM grow tired.*)

LARRY. Sure, heard 'em all.

ROLLISTON. Not this one, only happened yesterday.

LARRY. (*Resigned*) Fire away!

(*ROLLISTON sits back of table.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I think we should be going—  
(*Rising quickly*)

LARRY. (*Rising, stops her, she sits again*) Oh,  
mater, let him get this off his chest. (*Goes to side-board R. for cigarette and matches*)

ROLLISTON. The kids were playing baseball. The minister passed. (*He laughs uproariously*) That kid's a wonder—(*HETTY, MRS. GRAHAM and LARRY wear pained expressions*) Bobby goes up to the minister—(*ROLLISTON laugh uproariously again. LARRY interrupting*)

LARRY. (*Offering ROLLISTON a cigarette which he refuses with a gesture*) Is this a serial?



ROLLISTON. It's so funny. Bobby says are you an honest man?—and—the——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Why, I've never heard a word against the minister, have you Hetty?

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) The minister said I think I am, and Bobby said—(*ROLLISTON laughs uproariously, the others are still tired*) And Bobby said, well, you can hold my bat while I tie my shoe. (*He has spoken the answer through the laugh and it is quite unintelligible—ROLLISTON sees that they are not laughing and is annoyed*)

HETTY. We didn't get the point.

ROLLISTON. Oh! Minister—Honest Man—well, you can hold my bat while I tie my shoe. (*Laughs again*)

(*HETTY and LARRY laugh feebly, MRS. GRAHAM not at all.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. What a thing to say to a minister! The crying evil of this age is the children's utter lack of reverence.

ROLLISTON. Fan's going to send it to the Ladies Home Journal. Don't you think it's funny? (*To HETTY*) Minister? (*To LARRY*) Honest Man?

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) We got you, we got you. (*Sits R. of table*)

COLTON. (*Off-stage L.*) Anybody at home?

HETTY. Oh, come in, Mr. Colton. (*Rises and goes to door L.*)

(*Enter COLTON. In his arms are two boxes. He bows over the top of them to everybody.*)

COLTON. I did ring.

(*HETTY takes his hat and places it on chair above door L.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-morning, Mr. Colton.

COLTON. Good-morning.

ROLLISTON. Hello, Colton.

COLTON. Hello, Rollie.

LARRY. Sit down, Willie. (*He sits in chair L. of table and places the boxes on floor beside him*)

COLTON. (*To HETTY who is down L.*) Mrs. Colton sent me over to ask if you could take the Minerva Club this afternoon?

HETTY. Why, yes, if Carrie doesn't object. What's the matter?

COLTON. The lady we live with has left.

HETTY. Not the one that came last night?

COTON. The same—too lonesome.

ROLLISTON. You ought to be more companionable.

COLTON. I offered to, but Mrs. Colton couldn't see it that way.

MRS. GRAHAM. You'd better go right to Mrs. Hackenschmidt. She's on the 6th Ave.—I think it's 629—

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, mother, I never had any luck there. (*To COLTON*) Go right to Ellis Island.

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) Try Mrs. Polk's Select Domestic Bureau up on 59th Street near the Park. Reduced Gentlewomen. Occasionally you'll meet an interesting Southern widow.

(*Exchange of looks between MRS. GRAHAM and HETTY.*)

COLTON. (*Takes out notebook*) I'll make a note of Mrs. Polk's. (*Drops samples on table*)

ROLLISTON. (*Snatches samples and holding them up*) Larry wouldn't you know he hadn't been married a month? Samples to match.

(*COLTON reaches for them and snatches them out of his hand.*)

LARRY. Can't you see him. "Say, Miss, I want some heliotrope lace on the bias. Gimme enough to trim a waist."

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Laughing*) Larry behave.

ROLLISTON. What's in the package?

LARRY. (*Rising and looking at package*) I'll bet he's going to exchange something.

COLTON. I am not—only going to *credit* a pair of slippers and a shirt waist.

(LARRY and ROLLISTON *laugh uproariously*. LARRY *sits.*)

HETTY. (*Coming above COLTON and between COLTON and ROLLISTON*) It wouldn't hurt either of you to be as obliging. (*To COLTON*) Will you 'phone Mrs. Crane about the club?

COLTON. Yes, I'll attend to it. (*Writes in notebook*)

LARRY. I can see this is going to be your busy day.

HETTY. (*Comes over to MRS. GRAHAM on her L.*) Well I must go out and break it gently to Carrie that I'm going to have a party. Mother will come with me. I need your moral support in this crisis.

(MRS. GRAHAM *rises—goes R.* HETTY *puts* MRS. GRAHAM'S *chair against wall R.*)

ROLLISTON. Who's Mrs. Crane when she's at home?

MRS. GRAHAM. Mrs. Julia Stickney Crane, a most enlightened woman. She gives us the most instructive little talks on Shaw and Ibsen and Henry James and all those funny men.

LARRY. Highbrow stuff.

HETTY (*L. of mother*) Don't let them tease you, mother. Of course *our* literary pursuits must

seem tame to graduates of Sammy Fletcher's night school for husbands.

COLTON. What's that? Sounds good to me.

ROLLISTON. You're elected.

HETTY. Poor Mrs. Colton!

ROLLISTON. Come now, Hetty, all is not frivolity at our night school. You should have heard Larry last night.

HETTY. I did at 2 A. M.

LARRY. You were fast asleep.

ROLLISTON. We had some debate. Larry, for conjugal bliss and commuting versus. Sammy for bachelor flats and taxicabs. Larry offered to prove his case by bringing Sammy out to spend the day. (MRS. GRAHAM *exits* R.) Why——

HETTY. (*Interrupting*) What! Mr. Samuel Fletcher spend a day in my house. No, thank you. I've had all I want of your Sammy. (*Exits* R.)

ROLLISTON. Say, Larry, what did you do with him?

LARRY. What him?

ROLLISTON. Sammy?

LARRY. Sammy?

ROLLISTON. Why, you brought Sammy out here last night.

LARRY. Oh, what are you talking about?

ROLLISTON. I tell you, you and Sammy were soused to the eyebrows and you insisted on Sammy coming out to sample the commuter's life.

LARRY. Are you crazy?

ROLLISTON. I left you last night at your front gate. You were showing Sammy the lawn. Oh, Colton, they were immense.

LARRY. (*Rising quickly and pointing off* L.) Good Lord! He's upstairs in the spare room, *now*.

ROLLISTON. How did Hetty take it?

LARRY. She doesn't know. I forgot all about him. I must have been pickled. I've got to get him out of here quick. (*Crosses quickly* L.)

ROLLISTON. Here! You better stay home to-day and square yourself.

LARRY. I can't. Rathbone's sailing at ten and if I miss that boat I'll lose my meal ticket. What in blazes can I do?

ROLLISTON. Break it to her gently.

LARRY. (*Crosses to him*) Break it to her gently! You heard her when you merely suggested his coming. What will she say if she knows he's here uninvited? (*Goes L.*)

ROLLISTON. Of course, you know your own wife best. But if it were me I'd tell her.

LARRY. (*Standing L. C.*) And lose my happy home? (*Goes to ROLLISTON*) I've just promised her I wouldn't see him for months. (*Back L. C. again*)

COLTON. And he's upstairs? (*Screams with laughter*)

LARRY. Funny, isn't it?

ROLLISTON. It is, damn funny—(*Laughs*)

LARRY. Don't sit here and laugh. I tell you I've got to get Sammy out of here. Hetty might see him. How can I get her out of the house?

COLTON. Suggest that she go over and tell Mrs. Colton it's all right about Minerva.

LARRY. One on the brow for you. (*Kisses his hand and slaps COLTON on forehead*)

ROLLISTON. Think of that for a young husband new at the game! Shake.

(COLTON and ROLLISTON shake.)

LARRY. (*Between ROLLISTON and COLTON*) Now, business of conversation and hearty laughter while I chase upstairs. (*Starts for door L.*)

ROLLISTON. I'll tell him Bobby's new story.

COLTON. Let me go upstairs—(*Rises quickly and starts to run off*)

LARRY. (*Stopping him and pushing him back*)

*into chair*) It is awful, Colton. Do this for me and I'll remember you in my prayers. (*Starts for door again*)

HETTY. (*Entering quickly from R.*) Where are you going, Larry?

LARRY. (*Confused*) I've got to get a handkerchief.

HETTY. Finish your coffee. I'll get it. (*Crosses quickly L.*)

LARRY. (*Rushes at her. Stops her*) Oh, no, you've been up so early. You must be tired.

HETTY. (*Suspiciously*) Why this sudden consideration? What have you been doing?

LARRY. Oh, nothing, nothing—(*Brings chair and places it L. C.*) Sit down and rest awhile and talk to the boys. Rolliston is going to tell Colton the story.

HETTY. No, I'd rather go. (*Rises and starts for door*)

COLTON. They're walking out on you, Rollie.

HETTY. There must be some handkerchiefs in the spare-room. (*Turns to go out*)

LARRY. (*Snatching handkerchief from COLTON's pocket*) Here, I have one. Put it in the wrong pocket. Ha! Ha! (*Goes up to window C.*)

HETTY. (*Sitting in chair L. C.*) I don't want to seem inhospitable but I think you gentlemen had better go.

LARRY. (*Looking out window*) Oh, Shippy's still there.

COLTON. How about the club, Mrs. Brice?

LARRY. (*Down to her quickly*) I think I'd run over and tell Mrs. Colton's it's all right, dearie.

HETTY. Why, I can telephone her later. Do you want to get rid of me?

LARRY. Oh, no—not at all—(*Back of table to R. C.—taking a cigarette from box on table as he passes to R. C.*)

HETTY. Oh, I wish you'd go, Larry. It makes me so nervous.

COLTON. How did Carrie take it?

HETTY. She isn't exactly frantic with joy. My temper was going, so mother suggested that I retire from the scene of war.

LARRY. (*Running quickly across in front of table to HETTY and back of her*) Do you think it's right to leave your mother out there in the kitchen alone to fight your battles? (*Trying to get her out of chair*)

HETTY. Why not? She's enjoying it.

ROLLISTON. (*To COLTON*) Bobby met the minister. (*Grabbing COLTON'S arm. COLTON tries to shake him off*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting—trying to make HETTY rise*) Why don't you put on your hat and walk on ahead with the mater? Do you good to get a little air. Then on the way home, you can stop at Mrs. Colton's.

HETTY. I've had enough exercise for one morning. (*LARRY in despair goes up to window, then down L. C.*)

ROLLISTON. Bobby met the minister——

COLTON. (*To LARRY*) You'd better tell her.

APPLEBEE. (*Appears at window c.*) Anybody hurt?

LARRY. (*Up to window*) Say, get off that lawn!

APPLEBEE. What lawn? Who's hurt?

LARRY. You'll be in a minute.

APPLEBEE. What's the accident?

LARRY. There'll be one if you don't get off that lawn.

APPLEBEE. (*Coming in through window*) Madge saw Rolliston and Colton come in and thought something had happened.

HETTY. Everything's all right.

LARRY. All right!

APPLEBEE. (*Coming down to R. of table*) I wish

Madge would keep away from the front windows and let a man have his breakfast in peace. (*Sits*)

LARRY. (*Comes down grabs HETTY*) Why, Hetty—get Mr. Applebee a cup of coffee—(*Running her off R.*)

HETTY. I—I——

LARRY. You wouldn't see a man starving in your own house? (*HETTY exits R.—LARRY crosses back to L.*)

ROLLISTON. The kid said to the minister—you haven't heard this, Applebee——

LARRY. (*Coming to ROLLISTON'S L.*) Oh, dry up on that kid. Now listen to me. Rollie you wait for the mater and take her to the train. I'll sneak Sammy out the front way. Tell Hetty I've gone on—see——

(*Enter CARRIE with coffee cup followed by MRS. GRAHAM.*)

CARRIE. Oh, Mr. Brice, Mr. Shipman ain't taking the train to-day. (*Train whistles off L.*)

(*APPLEBEE jumps—dashes through window at back.*

*COLTON grabs boxes and dashes for hat which is on chair at left above door L. He collides with ROLLISTON who is dashing for hat on chair L. below door L. LARRY stands L. of table irresolute. COLTON grabs hat, rushes for window, collides with LARRY who getting out of COLTON'S way bumps into ROLLISTON—COLTON exits through window.*)

LARRY. Damn Rathbone——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Coming on quickly from R.*) Oh, boys, wait for me——

LARRY. (*Talking over shoulder as he exits*) Tell Mrs. Brice it's all right—Man upstairs—telephone—(*MRS. GRAHAM rushes up to window.*)  
ROLLISTON R. LARRY L. of her. They each grab her



*by the elbow and the three jump out of the window. As HETTY runs on from R.)*

HETTY. There's the train—(Up to window, stands there at window) Say, get off that lawn—

(CARRIE places cup on table—goes to sideboard R. with cigarette box. SAMMY enters L. in evening dress.)

CARRIE. (Turns sees LARRY. Screams) Help! Help!

(HETTY turns, sees LARRY, screams and rushes over to CARRIE R. They stand there in each other's arms screaming. LARRY smiling foolishly at them.)

CURTAIN.

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## ACT II.

SCENE:—*The living-room of the BRICE home.*  
TIME:—*Afternoon of the same day. It is a square room, the walls being treated in a manner similar to those of the dining-room, except that the wall paper is different in design and color. At R. 2 E. is a window with valence and curtains. In front of the window is an arm-chair. Above the window on an angle is a fireplace with fender fireirons, fire screen and andirons. On the mantel are vases of flowers, photograph frames and a small clock. On the breast of the mantel electric brackets with shades. At R. of fireplace, between it and the window is a small round table on which is a tall vase of flowers, book ends with books, cigarette*

*box and match stand. On the wall above table is a push button. On the wall below window R. is an electric switch. At right angles to the fireplace a couch with pillows. Back of it a long table on which is a lamp with shade, a desk set, a telephone, writing materials, etc., and two small vases of flowers. Back of this table a small chair. At R. center back are double glass doors leading to a veranda with a low balustrade. On the veranda, on each side of the door, is a pot containing a formal box tree. At R. of door is a small table with a tall vase of flowers. At L. against the stairway, is a narrow consol on which are a parasol, gloves, etc. Underneath the table a large and gaily colored market basket. Starting from the center of the stage and a little L. of C. a flight of stairs leads up and to L. to a balcony. From the balcony are two doors leading from about L. 1 E. and L. 2 E. to the bedroom. These doors have interior backings. In the wall above the landing is a high window with valence and curtains. On the landing is a copper vessel with growing ferns. Underneath the balcony at L. of stage are double glass doors leading to dining-room. The backing for these doors is a part of the first act-set. Above the doors and underneath the stairs is a coat closet in which are coats, etc. At R. of the closet against the wall, is a small table with lamp and shade and vase of flowers. At L. C. is a large square table on which are magazines, a bowl of flowers, and a picture puzzle. There is an armchair L. of table, an armchair R. of table and a small chair back of table. At the rise of curtain at C. of stage is a small round table used by MRS. CRANE for the notes and later placed by HETTY against the wall L. below the doors to dining-room. The furnishings and decorations of this room should*

*be simple but exquisite in taste. At the rise of the curtain are disclosed standing in the center of the room, MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE—seated facing her from R. to L. are: MRS. SHIPMAN, MRS. COLTON, MRS. GRAHAM, MRS. APPLEBEE, HETTY BRICE, MRS. ROLLISTON—they are listening with rapt attention to MRS. CRANE—MRS. GRAHAM is fanning herself vigorously—MRS. APPLEBEE languidly.*

*Before rise of curtain MRS. CRANE'S voice—*

MRS. CRANE. (*Standing c.*) When we get to the bottom of the question, we find that the lawn-makers want woman to be restricted to one sort of work—(*Curtain rises*) And I say to you, women of the Minerva Association for the—the—(*Consulting notes—All ladies leaning forward*) promulgation of Higher Civic Ideals—woman has been enslaved too long by man, bound in the chains of economic subjection. (*She pauses impressively and then consults notes*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Seated R. end of couch, to Mrs. Graham*) What does economic mean?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Seated L. end of couch, to Mrs. Colton*) My dear, Mrs. Colton, I haven't the vaguest idea.

MRS. CRANE. You wives—

MRS. COLTON. (*Interrupting*) Excuse me, Mrs. Crane—what does economic mean?

MRS. CRANE. Why, the economical—

MRS. COLTON. (*Interrupting*) Excuse me, Mrs. Crane I'm very economical. Willie, Mr. Colton is. Willie, says it's wonderful the way I manage with money. You see, I charge everything.

*(The other women with the exception of MRS. GRAHAM look annoyed at the interruption—MRS. GRAHAM pats MRS. COLTON'S hand)*

MRS. CRANE. (*Scornfully*) You wives are merely the subjects of your husband's bounty, strike off those chains. (*Her eye happens to fall on MRS. SHIPMAN*)

MRS. SHIPMAN. (*Seated in chair extreme R. nettled*) Really, if you mean me, I'm not in chains, I'd like to see any man try it.

MRS. CRANE. (*Witheringly*) My dear Mrs. Shipman, the individual must not be confounded with the masses. (*Turns to notes*)

MRS. SHIPMAN. Certainly not. (*MRS. CRANE turns to her*) I've no intention of being confounded with the masses. My mother was one of the Colonial Dames and my father on his step-father's side comes right down from the Mayflower. (*She draws herself up proudly*)

MRS. CRANE. (*Annoyed*) Where was I? (*Consulting notes*) Special sale of French models—no—Woman has been enslaved—Oh, yes, woman has too long been treated as a mere toy—

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Seated R. of table L. c. Interrupting*) As Byron said: "Woman is the drudge of the universe."

MRS. CRANE. I think that pearl of great price dropped from the lips of our eminent Leader, Mrs. Parkhurst.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Possibly I read so much. As Mr. Applebee says, Madge always has her nose in a book.

MRS. CRANE. Truly as (*MRS. APPLEBEE makes movement as if about to speak*) whoever says it—we needn't go into that—woman is the drudge of the universe. She slaves over all the stoves in Christendom.

FAN. (*Seated L. of table L. c.*) What's she going to do. You can't keep a servant for love or money in the suburbs. Really, the way they object to children and who could object to Bobby.

MRS. CRANE. That's it. The present economical

treatment of women is inimical to the development of the race. Motherhood is really a profession, the same as that of the butcher, the baker, the——

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Interrupting*) "The Candlestick Maker." From Dante, I think.

FAN. (*To MRS. CRANE*) It's easily seen, Mrs. Crane, you're not a mother.

MRS. CRANE. My dear, Mrs. Rolliston, while I may have neglected my opportunity in that field of endeavor, nevertheless, one must not narrow life down to the limits of the nursery. It's only by an effort that the average mother remembers that little Lucy's prettiness and little Bobby's precocious prattle are not as engrossing topics to all men as they are to her.

FAN. (*Rising*) Are you being personal, Mrs. Crane? Bobby's a very bright boy for his age, but I never knew before that I *bored* people with his "precocious prattle."

HETTY. (*Rises*) I'm sure, Fan, Mrs. Crane didn't mean your Bobby. (*MRS. ROLLISTON sits*)

MRS. CRANE. I didn't even know that Mrs. Rolliston had a Bobby—we'll call him Sammy—Sammy—(*Consults notes—suddenly SAMMY FLETCHER pokes his head out of the spare room door—he is in his evening trousers, dress shirt, and a red four-in-hand tie—HETTY sees him, and motions him back into room—she sits again*) These interruptions—while showing your keen appreciation of my humble efforts to *illustrate* woman's true place in the world. (*She pauses and looks over notes carefully*)

MRS. COLTON. (*To MRS. GRAHAM*) She said that before.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To MRS. COLTON*) Hush, my dear, don't let her lose the thread or she'll never get through.

MRS. CRANE. I do not regard women as mere chattels, and when I mentioned earlier in this little

talk about holding all things in common, I did not mean communal ownership of wives.

MRS. SHIPMAN. I should hope not.

MRS. COLTON. I don't think I understand.

MRS. GRAHAM. It isn't proper for you to understand—(*Rises*) Really, Hetty I think we should excuse Mrs. Colton.

MRS. COLTON. I don't want to be excused.

(MRS. GRAHAM *sits again.*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. As Maeterlinck says—"Strong meat for babes."

MRS. COLTON. I'm not a baby—(*Rises and comes to MRS. CRANE'S R.*) I'm a married woman now and can hear anything. (*To MRS. CRANE*) What's communal ownership?

MRS. CRANE. The communal ownership of wives means the joint ownership.

MRS. COLTON. But, I don't want to belong to anyone but Willie. (*She breaks down and cries*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Rises and takes MRS. COLTON'S back to her seat*) I knew this lecture would be too much for her.

MRS. CRANE. (*Very much annoyed, but with acid sweetness*) Ladies, ladies, I cannot restrain my thoughts on these burning issues of the hour to the level of the school girl.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Ah, Mrs. Crane, your thoughts are Art's true expression and all art is immoral.

MRS. CRANE. Exactly—(*Looking at notes*) Why should a woman sit quietly by the domestic hearth. That is part of the monstrous waste that goes on in the world. She should step boldly forth and seize her share, her glorious share in its betterment.

FAN. What of her children?

MRS. CRANE. She should not be a slave to her children. (MRS. SHIPMAN *looks at watch and edges to her chair*) for in conclusion—(*Everybody looks*

*relieved and sinks back in their seats*) I must impress on you the great truth, the wonderful truth which must be borne in mind when you think of devoting your life to your family to the neglect of the suffering humanity. You must remember and ponder on this sublime and immortal truth, that, the youngest child, even if it lives, must grow up. *(She pauses impressively, the women are a little taken back and then applaud)*

(MRS. SHIPMAN *looking at watch rises precipitately and comes R. of C.*)

HETTY. *(Rises and meets her L. of C.)* Oh, you're not going, Mrs. Shipman?

MRS. SHIPMAN. I must, really; it's been so instructive, Mrs. Crane. *(MRS. CRANE who has gone up to table, at back of couch, to get her wrap comes down R. of MRS. SHIPMAN)* I agree with you perfectly. Women must not be tied to the Home Circle but I've a new maid and I'm a little worried about the dinner. *(HETTY takes small stand and places it over L.)* and my husband's so fussy about his food. My! *It's five o'clock. It's high time the potatoes were on. (HETTY returns to L. of C. MRS. SHIPMAN bows to the ladies and to MRS. CRANE, and exits C and R. hurriedly—HETTY goes to door with her)*

MRS. CRANE. *(Coming C.)* Oh, the passion of discouragement that seizes me when I perceive the utter hopelessness of going on with my great task in a world full of Mrs. Shipmans.

MRS. APPLEBEE. *(Rising and coming to Mrs. CRANE)* My dear, do not give up your brave struggle. *(Brings her down to chair from which MRS. APPLEBEE has risen. MRS. CRANE sits, MRS. APPLEBEE stands R. of her)* Continue to scatter your little seeds of discontent *(MRS. CRANE gives*

*her her hand*) for as Bernard Shaw says: "Great trees from little acorns grow." (*HETTY comes down R. of C.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Rises and comes to HETTY R.*) I must be going, Mrs. Brice.

HETTY. Why?

MRS. COLTON. Willie might come home and if I'm not there he'll be so lonesome.

FAN. My dear, take it from an old married woman, begin now as you intend to go on.

HETTY. (*Leading MRS. COLTON to chair down R. MRS. APPLEBEE goes up to R. of C.*) Wait, my dear, until you've looked for a husband on the 6:13—and then when you see him dead and mangled—(*MRS. COLTON sits*) he strolls in at 7:45 serene and smiling, and sulks because you're not glad to see him. (*Sits on couch R. of MRS. GRAHAM*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I'm a patient woman but I've seen the time when Hetty's father came home and I was so glad to see him I could have slaughtered him.

MRS. CRANE. (*Rising*) Ladies, before we adjourn this, the last meeting of the season, I should be glad to answer any questions. If my discourses have suggested any of paramount interest.

(*The women sit thinking seriously—MRS. COLTON after glancing about.*)

MRS. COLTON. Would you mind giving me the name of your dressmaker?

MRS. CRANE. It's a Paquin model. (*Puts on wrap and turns to show to the best advantage*) That reminds me. Mme. Flanagan is having a special sale to-morrow of French models and while it is an inestimable privilege to open this wider field to your inquiring minds, I must hurry away for she promised me a private view.



(MRS. CRANE goes L., FAN rises and shakes hands with her. HETTY rises and goes up to door c.)

FAN. That's right, go early and avoid the rush.  
(Other ladies rise)

(MRS. CRANE turns and meets MRS. COLTON R. of c.)

MRS. COLTON. (*Meets her c.*) It's been so sweet,  
MRS. GRAHAM. (*To MRS. CRANE*) A spade—  
(*To MRS. COLTON*) I'm sure she's called a spade.

MRS. CRANE. Thank you, so much—(*As she turns to go—MRS. APPLEBEE meets her and shakes hands*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*L. of c.*) I shall so yearn for the September meeting—(*Kisses her twice and she exits c., being led to door by MRS. APPLEBEE. MRS. GRAHAM, FAN and MRS. COLTON watch them and laugh. MRS. COLTON crosses back to R. of MRS. GRAHAM, FAN down in front of table L. SAMMY appears on balcony and is motioned back by HETTY who is up c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Standing front of couch R. c.*) That woman's too glib with her opinions of married life.

MRS. COLTON. (*Standing R. of MRS. GRAHAM*) She ought to know, she's been married three times and divorced twice. (*Sits in chair R.*)

(MRS. GRAHAM sits L. end of couch.)

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Coming down c.*) As dear Henry James says: "Heaven helps her who helps herself."

FAN. Now, Mrs. Colton, one of her husbands did die. (*Sits L. of table L. c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. As dear Larry says, that helps some.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (c.) Oh, what matters a few husbands, more or less, to one so intellectual.

MRS. COLTON. Intellectual! Honest I get so tired of being intellectual I could almost die.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Oh, my dear child, to breathe the rarified air of the higher mental plane.

MRS. GRAHAM. It's pretty rare for mother.

(HETTY *returns* c.)

FAN. Me too—after these prolonged sessions on a high plane with Browning and Ibsen I'm so worn out I can't even appreciate Eleanor Glynn.

(CARRIE *enters from* L.)

CARRIE. (*Stands up* L. c.) All that wants tea can have it in the dining-room—

(*The women all turn in astonishment at the manner of the announcement. CARRIE is oblivious. HETTY is furious. FAN, to relieve the situation, rises.*)

FAN. (*Rising*) That's very nice.

(MRS. APPLEBEE, FAN, MRS. COLTON *and* MRS. GRAHAM *start to exit.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Coming to c. and meeting* MRS. APPLEBEE) I'd love it if it's iced.

MRS. APPLEBEE. Dear, Mrs. Colton, what a divinely refreshing idea.

(*They exit* L. MRS. COLTON *staring at* CARRIE.)

FAN. (*Coming up* c.) Speaking of Bobby—

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Who spoke of Bobby?

FAN. (*Going off together*) I must tell you Bobby's new story. Bobby met the minister——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Your husband told me.

FAN. And he said, "Are you an honest"——  
(*Exeunt L. continuing speech off. Voice dies off as they exit*)

CARRIE. There's a fresh fellow in my kitchen with a pakitch C. O. D. 75 cents.

HETTY. (*Down R. by sofa*) There must be some mistake. I ordered nothing. Find out what's in the package.

CARRIE. What do you know about that? (*CARRIE exits. HETTY starts L., gets C.*)

SAMMY. (*Appears at the door on balcony*) Hist—hist!

HETTY. (C.) Well, you nearly made a nice mess of everything, another moment and you would have been discovered.

SAMMY. Don't jump on me, someone called for Sammy.

HETTY. Mrs. Crane wasn't calling you.

(*SAMMY starts to come downstairs.*)

HETTY. Go back, please—(*Crosses quickly L., and looks off—points to spare room*)

SAMMY. Oh, kind lady, just one breath of fresh air before I die.

HETTY. Aren't you comfortable where you are? (*Comes front*)

SAMMY. (*On lower part of stairs*) I guess you never slept in your spare room. (*HETTY turns to him*) on a hot May afternoon. I'll do anything to oblige a lady, but my doctor says Turkish Baths are weakening. (*Comes down R. of C.*)

HETTY. I didn't ask you to sit up there. (*Follows him to L. of C.*) Why didn't you go for a walk?

SAMMY. Did you ever try to walk through a suburb on a hot afternoon in patent leather pumps, a silk hat, and an automobile coat? Isn't there a law against collecting crowds? Someone might ask me when the parade began.

HETTY. Have you tried on one of Larry's suits?

SAMMY. Have I tried on one of Larry's suits? Father's clothes will soon fit Willie. Haven't my clothes come?

HETTY. When Larry 'phoned this morning excusing your sudden arrival he said he had sent a suit by a special messenger. (*Goes L.*)

SAMMY. (*Stops her*) Say, have I got to sit up in that steam room until it comes?

HETTY. You can't stay here, the ladies might see you. (*Returning to his L.*)

SAMMY. Introduce me. I like that little blonde, the second from the end.

HETTY. What?

SAMMY. You could explain.

HETTY. Explain! If my friends saw you, I wouldn't have a shred of reputation left.

SAMMY. You flatter me. (*Flicks dust from coat lapel*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Voice off R.*) Hetty, my dear.

HETTY. (*Crosses quickly L.*) In a moment, mother. (*Motions SAMMY to the room*)

SAMMY. (*Up c.*) Please, kind lady, have pity; not, oh, not, the steam room.

HETTY. Well——

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) I'll be good.

HETTY. I must join the ladies; if you get bored there are some very interesting magazines on the table and a new picture puzzle. (*Takes puzzle from table L. c. and gives it to him c.*)

SAMMY. A Day in the Hay Field—178 pieces. Kindergarten stuff.

HETTY. (*She starts to go L.—stops and turns to him*) Can I do anything else for you?

SAMMY. Yes. Tip me off when those suffragettes are headed this way and I'll do a duck. (HETTY starts to go) Oh—I'd like to send a wire to the office on very important business.

HETTY. Just 'phone to the station. (HETTY exits L.)

SAMMY. (*Crossing to 'phone and taking up receiver*) Hello! (*Pause*) Hello, fair one, give me the station-house. I mean the station agent. Will you take this very important wire? Miss Gracie Lane, Knickerbocker Theatre, New York. "Can't keep date to-night. Kidnapped. It's a long story but am innocent. All my love and all my money, Sammy." Don't forget the money—(*Pause*) Eh—(*Pause*) Charge it to Larry Brice. (SAMMY hangs up receiver, crosses L. and takes off coat and places it on back of chair—he takes up magazines and reads titles) "Country Life in America." "American Homes and Gardens." "The Garden Magazine." Interesting magazines. "Bulbs that Bloom." Rube stuff—(*Picking up another magazine*) Here's a nifty little sheet—"The Ladies Home Journal." (*Reading*) "Cross stitch and crochet." "Fewer frills on French Lingerie"—(*He sits back of table and smiles to himself*)

(CARRIE enters from L. carrying a tray with a cup of tea on it.)

CARRIE. (*Looking over his shoulder*) Oh, Mr. Fletcher!

SAMMY. (*Jumps up quickly, takes coat from back of chair and starts to go upstairs, puts coat on*) Are they coming?

CARRIE. Who, the Minerva? Oh, not for a long time, these lectures is awful dry work. Mrs. Brice ast me to sneak in a cup of nice hot tea.

SAMMY. Thanks, Hebe—(*Comes down c.*)

CARRIE. I ain't Hebe. I'm Carrie. (*Comes to his L.*)

SAMMY. Say, little one, couldn't you get me a nice long one with ice in it?

CARRIE. Oh, I'm on, but this house is temperance, never any liquor except what Mr. Brice carries in. (*Puts cup of tea on table L. c.*) Say, what do you hang around here, for, where you ain't wanted?

SAMMY. I'm hipped on the place. (*Goes up to desk R. c. and sits*)

CARRIE. (*She follows up*) You'd better get out before you get what's coming to you. I'll bet when this hen-party goes, Mrs. Brice wouldn't do a thing to you for coming here soused.

SAMMY. Aren't you the cheerful little party?

CARRIE. (*Pointing to picture puzzle*) What's that?

SAMMY. Picture puzzles.

CARRIE. Have they got you doing that? Thought you were from the city.

SAMMY. Now, Sherlock.

CARRIE. Say, what's a big guy, like you, doing with kid games? I don't blame you. Honestly this place is dead slow. Not a moving picture show in the town. Wish I was back to Childs'. (*She leans over*) There's the piece you want, you ninny. Can't you see it's the man's eye. (*The bell rings off-stage—CARRIE pays no attention to it*) Do you know many people in the city?

SAMMY. I've been out several times on New Year's Eve.

(*Bell rings.*)

CARRIE. Any of your gentleman friends want a girl that's handy around the house?

SAMMY. Quite a few of my friends have one; still the demand is always greater than the supply.

CARRIE. That piece ain't right. That ain't his eye-brow. It's his moustache.

SAMMY. Oh, you've done this one.

CARRIE. I never saw it before but I know a moustache when I see one. (*Knocks a piece off on floor*)

SAMMY. There, you've knocked his ear on the floor.

CARRIE. Get it. I'll hold his face.

SAMMY. (*Rises and picks it up and gets on CARRIE'S L.*) Now, don't break it.

CARRIE. That ain't his ear. It's his foot.

(*They both laugh. SAMMY gets up and stands behind her—SAMMY leans over to put the piece in place—HETTY enters suddenly. She is aghast as it looks as though SAMMY had his arm around CARRIE.*)

HETTY. (*Up L. c.*) Carrie—

(*SAMMY and CARRIE start suddenly and some of the pieces fall on the floor.*)

CARRIE. (*R. near table—wrathfully to HETTY*) Now, you done it.

HETTY. (*L. c.*) What are you doing?

SAMMY. (*c., giggles*) Playing picture puzzles.

HETTY. Leave the room, please—(*SAMMY, thinking HETTY refers to him, starts for the stairs. CARRIE stops him, giggles, then comes in front of HETTY to door L. As soon as CARRIE gets on her L.*) I thought I asked you to see about that package—

CARRIE. It was a mistake. It was a strange suit of clothes, regular hand me down and I sent the feller about his business. (*She flounces out—SAMMY hears this and dashes out of the doors c.*)

HETTY. Why, they were Mr. Fletcher's. (*She turns and sees him flying out of the door. She goes up and watches him off c. doors*)

FAN. (*Enters from L.*) Hetty, I must run along — (*She sees HETTY at the door*) What's the matter?

HETTY. (*Coming down, bringing FAN with her to the couch*) Fan, before that man leaves here I'll be notorious.

FAN. What man? (*Sitting on HETTY's L.*)

HETTY. Sammy Fletcher. *Our* Sammy.

FAN. Sammy Fletcher here? When did he come?

HETTY. Last night. Oh, Fan, what I've been through! Larry brought him home and forgot that he brought him.

FAN. What's he like?

HETTY. Worse than we imagined in our wildest dreams. I caught him just now hugging Carrie.

FAN. What?

HETTY. Playing picture puzzles.

FAN. Huh! Hetty, that man's actions are grounds for divorce.

HETTY. I can't divorce Larry because Sammy Fletcher hugs Carrie. Anyway, I don't want to divorce him.

FAN. Rollie's been pretty bad but he's never turned our house into an all night refuge. I wouldn't stand it for a moment. Of course, I'd have to think of dear little Bobby but if I were in your shoes, I'd walk right out of the house and let Larry entertain his friend.

HETTY. I never thought about dinner. Larry and I always go to the club every Saturday night. There isn't a thing in the house. (*Rises and goes L. of C.*)

FAN. Let them get their own dinner. (*Quoting*) "Woman should not be the drudge of the universe." Now, what's the use of our paying Mrs. Crane for these lectures if we don't profit by them?

HETTY. I don't want to profit by Mrs. Crane's



experiences and have three husbands. One's enough for me.

FAN. Well, if you take my advice, you'll clear out. (*Rises and comes to HETTY'S R.*) I tell you, you come over and dine with me. Rollie isn't coming out to-night until the last train. I'll 'phone Dr. Lloyd and we'll have a game of dummy bridge. If you want to cure Larry you've got to do something devilish.

HETTY. That doesn't sound awfully devilish.

FAN. Do as you like. (*HETTY goes up c. Turns*) But listen to me, Hetty, I'm an old married woman, and if you want to hold a man make trouble for him. (*Exits c. and R.*)

(*HETTY exits to the dining room—A pause. SAMMY enters. He is mopping his brow. He carries a package from which protrudes a shirt, a tan boot and the leg of a pair of trousers. He starts up the stairs wearily. Enter MRS. COLTON, MRS. GRAHAM and MRS. APPLEBEE. MRS. COLTON sees SAMMY and goes off into violent hysterics. SAMMY stands petrified.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Pointing to SAMMY*) A burglar! A burglar! (*Down extreme L.*)

(*MRS. GRAHAM sees SAMMY and runs after him. SAMMY tries to run up the stairs, trips. MRS. GRAHAM grabs him by the foot.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Caught red-handed. Madge guard the door. (*MRS. APPLEBEE crosses to door up c. To MRS. COLTON*) Stop that yowling and 'phone for the police.

(*MRS. COLTON crosses to 'phone R.*)

SAMMY. I'm not a burglar.

MRS. GRAHAM. No. I suppose you're a friend of the family.

MRS. COLTON. (*She grabs the 'phone*) Gimme a policeman, quick. How do I know what his number is? Oh, Mr. Graham, what's the policeman's number?

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't bother me, I'm busy. (*MRS. GRAHAM dragging him downstairs, SAMMY drops cigarette case on floor c. He picks it up*) Hand that over.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*Standing behind them holding up parasol threateningly*) At once!

MRS. GRAHAM. What did I tell you. Larry's cigarette case! (*Grabs his arm*)

MRS. COLTON. Central, we have a burglar. Send a policeman right away, to Mrs. Brice's. (*Gets down extreme R.*)

(*MRS. APPLEBEE moves to L. C. as HETTY enters.*)

HETTY. (*Enters*) Why, mother, what are you doing?

MRS. COLTON. Catching burglars.

(*MRS. GRAHAM gives SAMMY a jerk.*)

HETTY. It's Larry's friend, Mr. Fletcher.

MRS. GRAHAM. What?

HETTY. (*Introducing him*) Ladies, let me present, Mr. Samuel Fletcher.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Frigidly*) How do you do.

SAMMY. Pleased to meet you. (*Bows to MRS. COLTON.*)  
MRS. GRAHAM *hands him cigarette case*) Thanks.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Angrily*) Don't mention it.

MRS. APPLEBEE. (*From L. C.*) Charmed, I'm sure. I hope you're enjoying your visit to our fair suburb.

SAMMY. Oh, yes, very much.

(MRS. GRAHAM starts to go.)

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-bye, Hetty.

HETTY. Oh, mother, are you going? (*Crosses to her c.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Yes, my nerves are considerably overturned; I need the air. Good-bye.

SAMMY. Good-afternoon—(*She bows frigidly to SAMMY and exits*)

MRS. COLTON. Good-bye, Hetty. (*Shakes hands with HETTY. SAMMY smiles at her. She scorns him and exits with MRS. GRAHAM*)

MRS. APPLEBEE. Good-morning, Hetty, Mr. Fletcher. (*Grabs his hand*) I hope you'll pardon our little error, as dear Shelly says "It's not the coat that makes the man."

SAMMY. No, the vest and trousers help some. (*MRS. APPLEBEE draws back indignantly and exits quickly c. and r. HETTY laughs*) I'm glad I've handed you a laugh. (*Getting over l.*)

HETTY. (*Sits on couch*) I'm so sorry. I don't mean to be rude, but you did look so funny. (*She laughs again—SAMMY joins in and both laugh heartily. SAMMY starts to stairs*)

SAMMY. I guess I'll go before I get in bad again. (*Going up c.*)

HETTY. Oh, you're not going? What will I say to Larry?

SAMMY. Any old thing that comes handy.

HETTY. But, if Larry finds you gone he'll think I haven't made it very entertaining for you.

SAMMY. It's been entertaining all right. I think I'd better leave before any other entertaining thing happens.

HETTY. (*SAMMY starts to go*) Will you tell me one thing? What is the baleful influence you exert over Larry and Rollie?

SAMMY. The "what ful" influence?

HETTY. Baleful was the word. In other words what on earth do they see in you.

SAMMY. (*Coming down c.*) Search me. The idiots both bore me to death. Coming to my flat, drinking up my best Scotch, smoking my choice cigars, smoking, why they eat 'em. All Rollie does is talk about that kid of his and when he gets through Larry begins about you. (*She rises, he stops confused—bows*)

HETTY. My husband may be a bore. I've never found him one, and he may be an idiot. I think he is or he wouldn't spend his time with you. (*Goes R.*)

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) I told you I'd get in wrong. I'm very sorry all this has happened, because I've been looking forward to meeting you. (*HETTY smiles sarcastically*) Larry has talked a lot about you.

HETTY. Yes, I know, bored you to death.

SAMMY. Don't hit a fellow when he's down. You may not believe it, but I wanted you to like me. (*She laughs*) Oh, what's the use? You think I'm the limit, and when a woman's mind's made up. (*Turns L. of c.*)

HETTY. (*Interrupting—following him*) That's precisely when she's dying to change it. Why are you such a thoroughly bad man.

SAMMY. I haven't anything on the husbands. They're a pretty bad lot. Do you know what's the trouble with married life?

HETTY. Yes, Bachelors. (*Both turn away—SAMMY to L. HETTY to R.*)

SAMMY. Must a married man give up his bachelor friends?

HETTY. No, only his friend's bad habits.

SAMMY. Me to reform. No married man can sit up in my flat. I'll found an order for the suppression of late hours for husbands. Will that square me? (*Puts out hand, HETTY takes it*) Well, good-bye. (*Runs upstairs and gets bundle*)

HETTY. No, not good-bye. Now you must stay to dinner with us—(SAMMY *looks surprised, drops bundle*) Stay to dinner with us.

SAMMY. You want me to? (*Picks up bundle*)

HETTY. Certainly. (*Crosses and rings the bell R. above window*)

SAMMY. You don't mind if I shake the benny and the soup and fish. (HETTY *laughs*) I'm a fancy little person when I'm all dolled up. (*Runs upstairs exits into room*)

(CARRIE *enters from L.*)

HETTY. (R. C.) We'll dine at home to-night.

CARRIE. (L. of C.) There ain't no dinner, unless you eat the scraps from the party.

HETTY. Then prepare the Sunday dinner.

CARRIE. Ain't none ordered. To-morrow's the day you eat to your mother's.

HETTY. I'll call up the market.

CARRIE. Saturday's a half day. The market is closed.

HETTY. Then I'll have to borrow some dinner from the neighbors. (*Goes to desk up R. C. starts to write note*) I'll write the note. You get the basket.

CARRIE. Me go around beggin' grub offen people—why?

HETTY. (*Writing*) Mr. Fletcher is stayin' for dinner.

CARRIE. Is he goin' to stop here?

HETTY. (*Coming down R. of C.*) Have you any objections?

CARRIE. I sure have. Comin' around here where he ain't wanted, and upsettin' everythin'. Didn't I have to get an extra breakfast for him? And didn't I have to drop everything and make chicken hash for his lunch and a party on my hands. I stayed in for your party though I was promised a half day and had accepted an invitation from my gentleman

friend to dine at Childs' and go to a moving picture show in the city. Now on top of all this you ask him to dinner. Now that settles it. I quits. I didn't hire out to be for everlastin' entertaining people. I'm willing to work, but, God knows I'm no electro dyanmo. (*Exits L. 2 E.*)

HETTY. (*Staggered, starts to call her then pulls herself together.*) No, I will be mistress in my own house. (*Takes basket from under table c. Exits c. and R.*)

SAMMY. (*Enters, comes downstairs whistling, "Oh Gee I'm Glad I'm Free No Wedding Bells For Me." Takes out cigarette case, takes a cigarette, feels for match. He hasn't one. He goes looking around for one*) Where in blazes do they keep the matches.

(*During this bus. BARNES, the village Policeman has stepped softly on the veranda. He watches SAMMY apparently going through the house. Finally as SAMMY comes to the table and opens the drawer to look in, BARNES tiptoes in and grabs him.*)

BARNES. Caught in the act, young fellow. (*Grabs his arms and drags him down c.*)

SAMMY. Who are you?

BARNES. Constabule, I 'rest you in the name of the Law.

SAMMY. The devil you do. (*SAMMY struggles*)

(*They get down R. c.*)

BARNES. Now go easy. It's two years extra for resistin' a officer.

SAMMY. You're bughouse. Who do you think I am?

BARNES. I guess they got your picture to the

head-quarters. Come along with me. (*Throws him over to his L.*)

SAMMY. I'm a friend of the family.

BARNES. Tell that to the Judge. A fine friend of the family going through the place.

SAMMY. I tell you I'm looking for a match.

BARNES. A match—huh!

SAMMY. I tell you I'm Mr. Fletcher. Here is my cigarette case to prove it. (*He hands BARNES LARRY'S cigarette case*)

BARNES. Since when has Fletcher been spelled with an L. B.? (*Puts it in pocket*)

SAMMY. I'll get Mrs. Brice. (*He crosses towards the dining room door L. 2 E. calling MRS. BRICE. BARNES runs after him and grabs him*)

BARNES. No, you don't. (*Dragging him up c.*)

SAMMY. (*At the door, calling*) Oh, Mrs. Brice—Mrs. Brice. (*No answer*) Can you beat this? (*Takes hold of BARNES' coat and brings him down c.*) My, good man, this is a mistake. Here. (*Goes in pocket for money*) Not a cent.

BARNES. There'll be an extra penalty for trying to bribe an officer of the law. You to the house. (*Drags him up c. BARNES starts to drag SAMMY off, LARRY appears on the veranda*)

LARRY. Hello! What's doing?

(*BARNES throws SAMMY down L. c.*)

SAMMY. Oh, nothing, I'm pinched, that's all.

LARRY. Pinched. (*Down R. c., laughing heartily*)

BARNES. Caught 'em working your house, Mr. Brice.

LARRY. It's a msitake.

BARNES. (*Interrupting*) Well, the ladies telephoned for me.

LARRY. He's a friend of mine.

BARNES. On the level? You're not just bein' sorry for him. He's a tough looking rummy.

LARRY. I'll answer for him. (BARNES *throws SAMMY off*) Here. (*Gives BARNES a dollar*)

BARNES. Thank you, sir. But I'd advise you, Mr. Brice, friend or no friend, keep an eye on him— (*Gives cigarette case to LARRY*) I've a book to home on crime that says all fellers with ears like his are crooks. (*Exits c. and L.*)

(LARRY *laughs*, SAMMY *imitates him*)

SAMMY. (*Front of table L. c.*) Funny, isn't it? You'd had to go bail for me in another minute.

LARRY. (*Coming c.*) Where was Hetty?

SAMMY. I called for help, but no one answered. She isn't there.

LARRY. Didn't she treat you right?

SAMMY. She's all right, but I'm in wrong. I've had a peach of a day.

LARRY. What's the matter?

SAMMY. Oh, nothing, scared Mrs. Brice out of a year's growth, this morning, cooped up all afternoon in a room with a southern exposure—

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, forget it, you can tell me your troubles later. Colton is outside with his car. We're going to run out to the club and show you a thing or two.

SAMMY. Mrs. Brice expects us for dinner. Can't we take her along?

LARRY. No, this is strictly stag. Hetty will understand. That's why we're such good pals. she's so understanding. (*Goes up to desk R. c.*) I'll just leave a note. (*Writing*) She'll go over to her mother's.

(*Enter CARRIE from L. 2.*)

SAMMY. Whither away, Hebe?



CARRIE. (C.) (*Turning on SAMMY*) Whither away yourself—and don't call me Hebe—(*To LARRY*) I'm fired, Mr. Brice. And it's all his fault. Comin' round here where he ain't wanted, and up-settin' everything'.

SAMMY. I thought I was about due for another jolt.

CARRIE. Makin' extra work.

LARRY. Extra work—(*Rises and comes down R. of CARRIE*)

CARRIE. Two breakfasts and a lunch.

LARRY. Isn't it customary in my house to have lunch? (*Gets R. C.*)

CARRIE. A cup o' tea, and a bite on a tray is enough for Mrs. Brice. But didn't I have to drop everything and me with a party on my hands and make chicken hash.

SAMMY. What's she kicking about, I ate the hash.

CARRIE. I ain't no fault to find with you, Mr. Brice, even if you do come home with the owl and get up with the rooster. But (*Turning to SAMMY*) I'll have my gentleman friend knock your block off. (*CARRIE exits C. and R.*)

LARRY. Can you beat it?

SAMMY. You can't even tie it.

LARRY. Oh, well, come on. (*Goes up to small stand L. C. and gets cap*)

SAMMY. I tell you Mrs. Brice expects us for dinner.

LARRY. (*Coming back C.*) She can't get dinner without a cook. You don't want to embarrass her?

SAMMY. It seems to me it isn't quite the right way to treat your wife.

LARRY. What do you know about treating a wife? Back up. (*Takes him to table L. C.*) Where's your hat? Here take this one. (*LARRY grabs a cap off a table by the closet door and jamps it down*)

over SAMMY's eyes) Come on, we'll cut across lots. It's just about first cocktail time. (LARRY hustles SAMMY out L. 2 E., a pause)

HETTY. (*Appears on the veranda carrying a heavy basket. She has a loaf of bread in her arm. Her hat is on one side. She staggers in with basket. Sets it on the table. Sees note left by LARRY*) "Gone to the Club. Will be home early bye-bye, darling" Oh. (*Goes over L., throwing letter down*)

FAN. (*Enters carrying a bowl of soup tied in napkin*) Hetty, dear, here's your soup.

HETTY. (*Takes soup*) I don't need the old soup. (*Puts it on table L. c.*) Larry's gone and left me high and dry. That's what I get for fussing over his old guests, and giving up my rights. My rights. For two pins, I'd divorce him this minute.

FAN. (R. c.) Oh, Hetty, don't do anything rash.

HETTY. (c.) I will if I feel like it. Going round begging food from door to door. Lugging that heavy basket through the hot sun. Making myself the laughing stock of the place. Go on, say I told you so. You're perfectly right, Fan. If you want to hold a man make trouble for him. Oh, I'll teach Mr. Larry a lesson he won't forget in a hurry. (*Goes up to door*)

FAN. Hetty, where are you going?

HETTY. I don't know *where*, but I'm going. (*Exits hurriedly c. and R. followed by FAN*)

CURTAIN.

## ACT III.

SCENE:—*Same as ACT I.*TIME:—*Two A. M.*

*The room is faintly illuminated by a lighted lamp on a table at the end of the couch R. another at table L. C. and by the moonlight visible through the glass doors at center back and at the window above the landing on the stairs. The curtains at the window R. are drawn. HETTY is lying on the couch R. fast asleep. As the curtain rises, the clock on the table back of the couch strikes two, wakening HETTY, who yawns, rubs her eyes and reaches sleepily for the clock. She notes the time. The lateness of the hour shocks her into alert wakefulness.*

HETTY. (*Amazed*) Two o'clock! (*She places the clock on the mantel and in so doing sees a telegram propped against a flower vase. She picks it up, reads the address*) A telegram for Mr. Samuel Fletcher. (*With a movement of petulant anger she slams it down on the mantel—at that moment MRS. COLTON'S voice is heard outside*)

MRS. COLTON. Hetty, Hetty?

HETTY. (*Startled, turns, runs to the switch at R. above window, turns on the lights and runs quickly to door at C.—opens it—Enter MRS. COLTON*) Why, Mrs. Colton, how you frightened me. (*Comes down L. C.*)

MRS. COLTON. (*Comes down R. of HETTY—she is in a fluffy peignoir over which she has thrown a light cloak*) Oh, Hetty, what has Larry done with

my Willie? I 'phoned the club at ten, and the boy said they'd left. He said for a joy ride. It's after two. I'm nearly crazy. (c.)

HETTY. (*In alarm*) Is Mr. Colton driving?

MRS. COLTON. Irving was at the wheel.

HETTY. Thank heaven.

MRS. COLTON. Why, Willie's a grand driver. I couldn't stand it any longer alone. I'm so nervous I haven't a finger nail left. Aren't you nervous?

HETTY. No, just mad, plain mad. Serve them right if they did get dumped out.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty, I tried hard to be mad. I tried to remember what all the women told me this afternoon, but I love Willie. (*Cries*)

HETTY. Of course you do. (*Leading Mrs. COLTON to couch*) Sit down—(*Mrs. COLTON sits*) Have a chocolate. (*Taking box off table*)

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes one*) I couldn't eat a bite of dinner. Willie left me all alone. (*She cries*)

HETTY. Have another.

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes another*) And I made a pudding special. (*Cries*)

HETTY. Try one of these.

MRS. COLTON. Thanks. (*Takes another*) Oh, you didn't need the cheese you borrowed, did you?

HETTY. No. (*Puts box back on table, goes c.*)

MRS. COLTON. I don't want to criticise another woman's husband but it was kind of mean of Larry when you went around an' borrowed everything. Did you eat it all alone, too?

HETTY. I did not. I dined with Fan. Dr. Lloyd brought me home at half-past nine, like an idiot.

MRS. COLTON. Dr. Lloyd seems intelligent.

HETTY. I'm the idiot. Fan wanted me to stay but I thought Larry might get home, be worried and sit up for me. Huh!

MRS. COLTON. (*Getting up*) I'd better go. I don't want to worry Willie.

HETTY. Sit down! (Mrs. COLTON *sits again*) I see a man worrying, or sitting up for his wife. He'd go to bed contentedly if he didn't die of the shock.

MRS. COLTON. Willie didn't want to go but he said if he refused to leave his wife they'd think it wasn't manly.

HETTY Manly! Who wants a man tied to her apron strings all day?

MRS. COLTON. I'd kind of like it if it was Willie.

HETTY. What do they *marry* us for if they want to stay *out* all night? Why can't a *woman* have the courage of her convictions, treat a *man* as he treats *her*. Look at me! I've every right to be furious. Lugging that heavy basket through the hot sun and I was going to teach Larry a lesson. Do something *devilish*.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty!

HETTY. Devilish. Sitting home here since half-past nine, ruining my digestion eating chocolates and worrying. Why, if I go in to a matinee I have to leave before the play's half over so afraid dear Larry might get home first and be anxious.

MRS. COLTON. It's terrible. I haven't seen an emotional actress die since I've been married. The last matinee I went to the leading lady began to die at 4 o'clock and at 4:15. I had to run for Willie's train. I hope he isn't going to keep this up. If he does I'll tell his mother. (*An auto siren is heard in the distance off R.*) Oh, there's Salome. (*Rises*)

HETTY. Salome?

MRS. COLTON. I call the car Salome cause it wiggles. I'm awful, aren't I even if I am married? Oh, I must hurry. (*Starts to go*)

HETTY. Don't let them see you. (*Passes her over L.*) Here, go the back way. I'm going to give Larry a good scare.

MRS. COLTON. Oh, Hetty, what are you going to do?

HETTY. Hide in the coat closet. (*Puts out lamp on table R.*) Go on. Don't tell Larry I'm here.

MRS. COLTON. I won't. (*Starts to go then stops*) I wish I had time to hide, too.

HETTY. But you haven't. Skedaddle.

(MRS. COLTON runs off door L. HETTY switches off bracket and runs to lamp that is on table up L. C., turns it off and exits into closet. In the ceiling is an electric light that shines on her as she enters. She closes the door. The room is in darkness. It is now bright moonlight outside. A slight pause. Then from R. C. enter LARRY. He peers through the glass doors into the room. Then opens the door cautiously. He enters, looks all around the room, returns to door, beckons off R. to SAMMY, then on tiptoe goes quickly down R. to switch. SAMMY enters, stumbles.)

LARRY. Sh! can't you? (*Touches button*)

SAMMY. (*Singing*) I just can't make my feet behave.

LARRY. Great ride, wasn't it?

SAMMY. Blame sight better than sitting around that stuffy club.

LARRY. Club's all right.

SAMMY. But the people are stuffy.

LARRY. (*Whispers, then picks up clock from mantel*) Two fifteen. Say, that driver of Colton's is a wiz! He certainly let her out; we did the last two miles in three minutes. (*Puts clock back in place*)

SAMMY. Who was that peacemaker on the home stretch?

LARRY. Dr. Lloyd.

SAMMY. Had a dame with him, didn't he?

LARRY. Yes. Watch me hand Hetty one on the model doctor. Have a drink?

SAMMY. No, I've had enough; me for the hay.  
(*Yawning. Starts to stairs*)

LARRY. (*Yawning*) Here, too. Well, no 7:46 to-morrow, thank God, nothing but church.

SAMMY. (*Turns*) Church! You're not going to ring me in on that?

LARRY. Sure, do you good.

SAMMY. Well, call me early, Mother: I've got to study my catechism.

(*LARRY switches off the lights. They start upstairs, walking very softly. As they reach the landing, HETTY comes out, stands in under the stairs unobserved.*)

LARRY. Good-night.

SAMMY. Good-night. (*SAMMY exits into his room, switches on light and closes the door. LARRY opens his door cautiously and switches on light. HETTY stands below listening, smothering her laughter*)

LARRY. (*Voice off*) Oh! (*He tears out of his room along the landing to SAMMY's room. He rattles the door fiercely. HETTY is weak with laughter. SAMMY opens the door, the light shining on their faces*) Sammy! Sammy! Is my wife in your room?

SAMMY. Good heavens, no!

LARRY. Where is she?

SAMMY. Isn't she in her room?

LARRY. In her room, you idiot? Would I be looking for her if she were?

SAMMY. Maybe she's out?

LARRY. Where?

SAMMY. With some of her women friends.

LARRY. What would they be doing?

SAMMY. Talking about their other friends.

LARRY. If she went out, why should she stay out?

SAMMY. Maybe to get square with you for last night and other nights?

(HETTY *snatches scarf from hook in closet, and exits quickly* L. 2 R.)

LARRY. Don't be a damn fool!

SAMMY. No, sir.

(*Door slams off L.*)

LARRY. What was that? (*He starts down the stairs*)

SAMMY. (*Yawning*) Um!

LARRY. Didn't you hear anything? (*Running downstairs to landing. He turns to SAMMY*)

SAMMY. (*Yawning*) No, unless it was my downy whispering, "Come, Sammy darling." (*Goes back into room*).

LARRY. (*From landing*) You're not going to desert me in such trouble!

SAMMY. Trouble? She'll be home presently. Say your "Now I lay me's" and go to bed!

LARRY. Bed, the man talks of bed, when I don't know what has become of my Hetty! (*Running down and crosses to switch over R.*) Hetty, Hetty! (*Pushes switch*)

SAMMY. (*Yawning, at head of stairs*) Oh, come on to bed (*Coming downstairs*)

LARRY. It's easy for you to talk: you're not her husband! (*Exits to dining room L. 2, turns on lights in dining room, voice off-stage*) Hetty, Hetty, where are you?

SAMMY. (*Coming downstairs*) And they talk of the quiet life in the suburbs!

LARRY. (*Entering and running to veranda*) Hetty, Hetty! (*Calling off through window*)

SAMMY. Oh, come in. People will think you are



calling the cat! (SAMMY comes down to table L. C., takes cigarette and lights it)

LARRY. None of your silly jokes! Haven't you any tact when a man's worried! Oh, this is awful! (Sits on couch)

SAMMY. How do you like it?

LARRY. Like what?

SAMMY. Now you know how she feels when you don't come home nights.

LARRY. Oh, a man's different.

SAMMY. Yes, makes a different kind of an ass of himself. I told you we should have stayed home to-night. (Sits R. of table)

LARRY. Stayed at home? Who wanted to go to the Club? I had to entertain you. I'd rather have been here with my dear wife.

SAMMY. (Imitating him) His dear wife——

LARRY. We always ate dinner together at the club on Saturday night. Maybe I'll never eat with her again! (He breaks down)

SAMMY. Say, are you going to have hysterics?

LARRY. That's right, you cold-blooded brute! If it hadn't been for you, all this wouldn't have happened—coming out here estranging me from my wife.

SAMMY. I didn't want to come. (Gets rid of cigarette on ash-tray on table)

LARRY. You didn't: you forced yourself on me!

SAMMY. I like that! Dragged out of my nice cozy flat, roasted all day, jumped on by everybody, bored with a lot of yaps at that inebriates' home you call a club. I may be a worm, but by the Jumping Jerusalem. (Rises) I can do a flip-flap. I'm going now. (He starts for the stairs)

LARRY. That's right, get me into this mess and lay down on me, leave me, just like you! You've the heart of a fish. You've driven my wife out of her sheltering home; you'll stay here and help me find

her—Anyway, you can't go, there isn't a train.  
(SAMMY *returns and sits gloomily. A pause.*  
LARRY *looks at him, gets up, runs over to him*)  
Why don't you say something? Why don't you do something?

SAMMY. What the hell can I do? I don't know where your dear wife is. If I had a wife I wouldn't leave her lying around loose.

LARRY. If you had a wife—! I'd had mine if it hadn't been for you and your cursed flat! What do you mean enveigling me there, getting me drunk, making me neglect my Hetty; oh, Hetty, Hetty, where are you? (*Suddenly rushes to the telephone*)

SAMMY. What are you going to do? (*Rises and comes up*)

LARRY. Call up Fan Rolliston.

SAMMY. That's a cute idea, wake people up at this hour of the morning!

LARRY. What do I care for the people? I want my Hetty.

SAMMY. Haven't you any pride? Do you want to give the neighbors the impression that your wife's out on a bat? (*Puts down 'phone*)

LARRY, (*Over to him*) How dare you insult my wife!

SAMMY. Oh, I didn't mean what you mean! My foot slipped. Now, I have to pick and choose my language. (*LARRY darts back to the phone*) Now what are you going to do?

LARRY. Call up Mrs. Graham.

SAMMY. Are you crazy? Call up her mother at half-past two and scare her out of her fifty-seven senses! Go on—go on—and we'll have her up here in hysterics! (*LARRY puts down telephone*) And I came out to spend a nice peaceful day in the country! (*Sits R. of table*)

LARRY. Haven't you had it? (*Goes R. and sits on couch. SAMMY just looks at him and groans*)

If anything has happened to Hetty, I swear I'll never stay out again.

SAMMY. Remorse stuff: "When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be."

LARRY. Can that—?

SAMMY. If you swear to stay in nights when she does come back, it would be more like it.

LARRY. Maybe I'd better notify the police?  
(*Jumps up quickly*)

SAMMY. (*Jumps up, heading him off*) If you've got a straight-jacket kicking around the house, I'll give you a fitting now.

LARRY. To think I've made her suffer like this!  
(*Sits again on couch*)

SAMMY. Have a drink?

LARRY. I never want to see the stuff again!

SAMMY. Well, you are on the mourner's bench!  
(*Picks up box of chocolates*) Have a chocolate?

LARRY. I'll give you a punch in the eye!  
(*Snatches box and puts it on stand R.*)

(*HETTY has come to the door; she is looking in; a step is heard crunching on the gravel off R. She turns around startled and runs away again along the veranda to L. LARRY and SAMMY hear the steps*)

LARRY. That's Hetty! (*Jumping up. Runs up and throws open the door*)

SAMMY. Not unless she wears a number eleven.  
(*SAMMY goes L.*)

(*ROLLISTON appears at the door.*)

LARRY. Oh, it's you!

ROLLISTON. Yes, hello, Sammy, I came out on the last train; saw the light and came in.

(*Comes down C. LARRY R. SAMMY L.*)

LARRY. I've awful news for you, Rollie. (To SAMMY) Perhaps you'd better break it to him, Sammy?

SAMMY. No: "Let George do it." (*Goes back of table L. C.*)

LARRY. Hetty has disappeared.

ROLLISTON. (*Screams with laughter; during his shrieks he speaks*) It's working! (*Laughs*) It's working! (*Laughs*)

(LARRY and SAMMY look at ROLLISTON as though he had suddenly gone mad.)

SAMMY. What's working?

ROLLISTON. (*He looks again at LARRY and laughs*) This is rich! (*He laughs at LARRY*) You're so easy! (*Sits R. of table. He laughs*)

LARRY. (*Furiously, coming over to them*) If you know anything about my Hetty's disappearance don't sit there grinning like a pie-eyed Billiken, spit it out!

ROLLISTON. Hetty and Fan have certainly put one over on you.

LARRY. (*Looks at SAMMY*) Hetty and Fan! What do you mean?

ROLLISTON. They planned this disappearance to give you a scare.

LARRY. Oh, piffle! (*Turns R.*)

ROLLISTON. When I called Fan up to-night she put me wise to the joke.

LARRY. (*Looks at him blankly*) Joke!

ROLLISTON. Yes, Hetty's been at my house all evening; she's there now.

(HETTY appears at windows at back. He laughs uproariously, looks at SAMMY, on whom the light breaks. SAMMY yells with laughter.)

SAMMY. I'm on. (*They both work up the laugh*)

—LARRY *growing furious*. HETTY *has disappeared again unobserved*)

LARRY. Laugh, go on! (*Laughs*) Go on, mock at my grief! (SAMMY and ROLLISTON *shriek*) You—! (*To SAMMY*) If it hadn't been for you, I'd have telephoned and saved myself this anguish—

ROLLISTON. (*Laughing*) Anguish?

LARRY. And you! (*To ROLLISTON*) Why didn't you 'phone me, you're a fine mut! I wouldn't have let them put one over on you. Husbands should hang together; (*Loud laugh from SAMMY and ROLLIE*) and when you're both through acting like a couple of congenital idiots perhaps you'll explain the whyness of this joke. (*Crosses R.*)

ROLLISTON. He isn't on!

SAMMY. No, he's cold! (*They both laugh*)

ROLLISTON. Don't you perceive? You worried Hetty by staying out nights. Reverse English: She wanted to worry you—

LARRY. I see.

ROLLISTON. He sees!

SAMMY. He's getting warm!

LARRY. Who put Hetty up to this?

ROLLISTON. Fan; she didn't think you were treating Hetty squarely.

LARRY. (*Right up to him*) Oh, she didn't? Well I like her everlasting nerve! (*Goes back R. c.*)

ROLLISTON. Here, don't get fresh with my wife! (*Rises and comes forward to him*)

LARRY. (*Going to R. c.*) Well, you tell her not to get fresh with mine!

SAMMY (*Comes between them*) Now, don't you two start anything!

LARRY. Don't you butt in. (*Pushes him back*)

ROLLISTON. (*To SAMMY*) Well, what do you think of him? Can't take a little joke. (*Goes L.*)

LARRY. A little joke! (*Goes R. c.*) It's all very well for you to talk; you haven't sat here seeing her laid out on a little marble slab!

ROLLISTON. Oh, well, (*Takes his hat*) come on over home and get your dear wife. (*Coming up*)

SAMMY. (*c., stopping them*) Wait a minute, wait a minute: I've an idea.

LARRY. An idea? Bottle it—(*Goes R.*)

SAMMY. That's the trouble with you husbands, you never know how to turn a trick to your advantage. Now, if you take my advice—

LARRY. I don't want your advice—all I want is Hetty—

SAMMY. Oh, very well,—you know it all—(*Crosses L. of c. LARRY starts*)

ROLLISTON. Hold on, he has an occasional gleam of intelligence; (*Indicating SAMMY, who bows*) bring on your idea.

SAMMY. Sit down. (*ROLLIE sits R. of table L. c.*)

LARRY. No, I'm going for Hetty.

ROLLISTON. Oh, sit down!

LARRY. Now, no preliminaries! (*Brings chair from R. to R. c.*) Get busy with the point. (*Sits in it*)

SAMMY. You'd like to turn the laugh on Hetty! Well, to begin with—

LARRY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Oh, come on. (*Rises and comes up c.*)

SAMMY. Don't let Hetty know you've been making an ass of yourself.

LARRY. What do I care if she does know the truth about me? (*SAMMY and ROLLISTON both laugh*) I mean, I don't care what she knows—all I want to do is to take Hetty in my arms and implore her forgiveness. (*Clasps SAMMY fervently in his arms. LARRY indignantly pushes him off*)

SAMMY. Good heavens! You'd think the woman wasn't his wife! Do you want to give her the whip handle over you for life?

ROLLISTON. There's something in that—

SAMMY. You see, Rollie knows; now, you don't

want to be like him? Afraid to call your soul your own!

ROLLISTON. (*Rises and comes to L. of SAMMY*) Who's afraid to call his soul his own?

LARRY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Now, you start something. Let him finish; whatever it is, it's no good. Go on. (*Sits again R. C. ROLLIE sits L.*)

SAMMY. If I weren't really fond of you.

LARRY. Cut that, the point.

ROLLISTON. Yes, the point.

SAMMY. Rollie goes home, doesn't say anything about being here, advises Mrs. Brice to come home. Mrs. Brice comes home, we're in bed, indignant husband for you, repentant wife for Mrs. Brice, concealed laughter for little Sammy.

ROLLISTON. Sounds good to me. (*SAMMY smiles*)

LARRY. I don't know, I'm not very strong for it.

SAMMY. If you had thought of it, it would be immense.

ROLLISTON. Don't you see, the joke will be on Hetty and Fan? Listens well.

SAMMY. (*To ROLLISTON*) Injured husband, sitting up all night.

LARRY. There, you see, that's his bright idea—she knows we went to the club. Oh, come on Rollie. (*Rises and goes up c.*)

SAMMY. (*Stopping him and bringing him down c.*) Don't you see—you took me out there because you didn't want to embarrass her owing to departure of Carrie. Hasty bite, quick return—reward—a night of tortured anxiety—

LARRY. All right. (*Crosses to c. turns*) What do you do first?

SAMMY. Go make yourself look like a distracted husband. Rollie and I'll give this room a worried look.

(ROLLIE hangs a newspaper neatly over back of chair. LARRY starts to go and stops on lower step.)

LARRY. What am I going to say to her?

SAMMY. "Is that you, darling?"

LARRY. It's easily seen you never came home late to a wife. (*Coming down c.*)

ROLLISTON. "Is that you, darling?" Not a bit like it: "This is a fine time to get home! Where the hell have you been?" (*Near LARRY*)

LARRY. Is that what your wife hands you?

(ROLLIE draws back angrily and gets front of table  
L. C.)

SAMMY. Well, we'll can the darling. "Is that you, Hetty?"

LARRY. (*Business*) What will she say?

SAMMY. Oh, she'll come right back at you with—

ROLLISTON. (*Interrupting*) Oh, yes, she'll come right back at you, all right. (*Front of table L. c.*)

SAMMY. Say, I know women: if you hand it to her right in a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger style she'll kneel at your feet and beg—

LARRY. (*On lower steps*) Doesn't sound much like Hetty!

SAMMY. It's all up to the way you do it. Can't you dig up a candle somewhere? You know; get busy, come on, Rollie. (*LARRY starts to go. SAMMY and ROLLISTON begin to throw books and papers around. SAMMY grabs paper that ROLLISTON has placed on back of chair*)

SAMMY. Not at all, not at all! My God, where can she be? (*He crushes it and throws it at ROLLISTON*)

ROLLISTON. (*Picks up another paper*) Oh, where, oh, where, is my little brown wife? (*Throws at SAMMY*)



LARRY. Say—(Both SAMMY and ROLLISTON turn) What are you two trying to do? Wreck this place? (*Exits into his room off balcony*)

ROLLISTON. Isn't he the fussy little party? Gee, I'm going to enjoy this. (*Sits in chair R. of table L. C.*)

SAMMY. You enjoy it? You won't be here. (*Takes up ROLLISTON's hat, puts it on his head and leads him up to door*)

ROLLISTON. Why not?

SAMMY. You yap, you're not supposed to be in on this joke. All you have to do is chase home and send her here.

ROLLISTON. I like that, me frame this thing up and not be here on the laugh!

SAMMY. You can laugh to-morrow. (*He pushes ROLLISTON out. SAMMY switches out the lights from switch R., then runs into room L., turns off light and runs upstairs, opens LARRY's door and says*) Fine! (*Goes to his door, laughs and exits. Shuts door. HETTY appears at the door, enters, stops as though a thought had suddenly occurred to her, opens the door, holds it ajar and steps on the veranda again*)

HETTY. Good-night, I've had a perfectly lovely evening. (*Enters, comes down c.*)

(LARRY appears on the landing in dressing gown and slippers, carrying a lighted candle: a reversal of the usual midnight picture.)

LARRY. (*In mock reproof*) Is that you, Hetty?

HETTY. Yes, dear. (*SAMMY enters and stands in door. HETTY goes over R.*)

LARRY. Do you know what time it is?

HETTY. (*Switching on the lights*) Is it late, darling?

LARRY. Half-past two.

HETTY. Really?

LARRY. How can you stay out so late when you know you have to get up in the morning?

HETTY. Oh, that's all right, dear, to-morrow is Sunday. Hope you didn't sit up for me. (*Sits on sofa*)

LARRY. (*Comes downstairs and crosses to desk R. C.*) You know I can't get a wink of sleep until you're in the house. (*Looks at SAMMY, blows out candle and places it on table R. C.*) Where have you been? Now, Hetty, don't tell me you have been sitting up with a sick friend? (*Moves to C.*)

HETTY. Met a couple of the girls, had a couple of drinks——

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) What?

HETTY. Of cocoa. We got to telling stories, one led to another. I wanted to come home, but as you say, one can't be a quitter.

LARRY. I am glad you've enjoyed yourself. (*Crosses to L. C.*) Sammy and I have been nearly frantic with anxiety. (*Turns to SAMMY who, on the landing, is watching the scene*)

HETTY. Oh, good-evening, Mr. Fletcher.

SAMMY. Good-morning, Mrs. Brice. (*Comes downstairs*) We've both been very much worried about you.

HETTY. Oh, Mr. Fletcher, it's so sweet of you to worry. (*SAMMY goes down to LARRY'S R.*)

LARRY. (*L. C.*) Of course, I don't mind for myself, but it's hardly hospitable to Sammy to stay out all night and make him feel as though he weren't wanted. (*His arm around SAMMY'S shoulder*)

SAMMY. Don't reproach her on my account. I did feel it: it's a terrible thing to have a sensitive disposition.

HETTY. This room looks as if it had been struck by a cyclone. You seem to have been enjoying yourself? (*Gets box of chocolates*)

LARRY. (*Exchanges look with SAMMY*) Sammy,

do you hear her, enjoying ourselves! I've had a night of tortured anxiety.

HETTY. If I had thought you would worry about me—but there have been so many evenings that you've managed to be content with Mr. Fletcher's society. (*LARRY crosses down L. c. near armchair. SAMMY moves towards HETTY. To SAMMY*) Have a chocolate?

(*LARRY and SAMMY are staggered a moment. SAMMY recovers while LARRY sits in armchair. SAMMY in pantomime indicates telephone.*)

LARRY. Why didn't you telephone me?

HETTY. I did intend to, but the time slipped away and I didn't want to disturb your rest——

LARRY. Disturb my rest, and did you think I could sleep calmly not knowing where you were or what you were doing? (*Rises and comes c.*) By the way, what were you doing?

HETTY. Oh, didn't I tell you?

(*SAMMY comes down c.*)

LARRY. No.

HETTY. Didn't I?

LARRY. I didn't hear you mention it, did you, Sammy?

SAMMY. Nary a mention——

HETTY. Granted that I am accountable for my actions to my husband—(*They both bow*) though I don't grant it. (*Both draw themselves up*) I am accountable *only* to him.

SAMMY. Zowie! (*Crosses back of LARRY to L. of c. He retires knocked out. HETTY helps herself to a chocolate*)

LARRY. (*Crosses to her c.*) Come, come, Hetty, you're evading the point—where were you?

(SAMMY comes down L. C.)

HETTY. I don't see that it is necessary that you should know.

(Exchange of looks between LARRY and SAMMY.)

LARRY. I've a right to know: I'm your husband!

HETTY. I'm your wife, but under similar circumstances, I don't cross examine you. I'm content with your explanations, no matter how fishy they are.

(SAMMY gives suppressed giggle.)

LARRY. (Crossing to SAMMY) When does she kneel and beg?

SAMMY. She's missed the cue—go after her—  
(Crosses back of him and pulls him by arm to C.)

LARRY. These excuses will not do. (HETTY turns and laughs tantalizingly, puts chocolates on stand by her R.) Have you no longer any feeling for me, (Exchanges looks with SAMMY and crosses down to chair R. of table L. C.) that you could condemn me to an evening of tortured anxiety?

HETTY. You're repeating yourself! (He sits in arm-chair R. of table L. C.) Well, how do you like an evening of tortured anxiety? How do you like to sit here waiting, waiting, trying to convince yourself that the one you love is safe somewhere enjoying himself without thought of you? But you—you are worrying—worrying. A call on the telephone and your heart stands still with fear! Perhaps something has happened, dead possibly, and you wonder were you kind to him that morning! Did he kiss you good-bye? Oh, God, suppose you never kiss him good-bye again! I've had several nights of that, you've had one. (Rises) Well, how do you like it? (Crosses to him) How do you like it? (Turns

*up-stage to the stairs. LARRY and SAMMY are paralyzed. The telephone bell rings sharply, LARRY rises and crosses to 'phone R. SAMMY gets up-stage near C. window)*

LARRY. Hello! Oh, hello, Rollie. Yes, Hetty's here. What a relief! She left your house at half-past nine with Dr. Lloyd. *(He slams the receiver on the telephone. LARRY crosses to her quickly)* Where have you been? I insist on knowing where you've been? This joke is going far enough. *(Crosses down R.)*

HETTY. What joke? *(Follows to c.)*

LARRY. The joke you and Fan were to play on me. Well, you'll just explain where Dr. Lloyd comes in on this joke. Where have you been with Dr. Lloyd—*(Close to her)*

HETTY. *(L. of c.)* I refuse to answer that question, I refuse to insult you by acknowledging that the question has been asked.

LARRY. *(R. of c.)* You can't answer it. You've been out until this hour of the morning with Dr. Lloyd!

HETTY. I don't deny that I've seen Dr. Lloyd, but I do deny your right to question me in such a manner.

LARRY. You don't deny it! *(Goes R.)* That's good, you can't. I saw you with him; you were in his car; we passed you not half an hour ago. The point is, you'll tell me now at once where—*(Comes to her R.)* you've been!

HETTY. I'll tell you nothing. *(Starts for stairs)*

LARRY. You won't, eh? I'll soon find out. *(He darts to the telephone)*

HETTY. What are you going to do?

LARRY. Call up Dr. Lloyd.

HETTY. If you humiliate me by calling up Dr. Lloyd, I'll walk out of this house and never set foot in it again! *(She comes c.)* I warn you there's a limit even to my endurance. You can ignore me,

neglect me; rebel and I am made the object of vulgar suspicion. I must sit patiently at home. What do you care for me or my loneliness; you must be free to amuse yourself as you see fit. Now I intend to enjoy an equal liberty, and when you leave me to spend my evenings alone, don't presume to call me to account. (*Starts for stairs*)

SAMMY. (*Who has been standing at back, coming forward quickly*) It's all a joke, Mrs. Brice.

HETTY. (*Laughs bitterly*) A joke to be humiliated, insulted; that's not my idea of a joke! (*Goes up to first landing. She turns and runs upstairs. LARRY runs after her, to foot of stairs*) No—no—don't come near me, don't touch me. I hate you—I hate you! I hate you! (*She exits and slams the door*)

SAMMY. This is a hell of a joke!

## CURTAIN.

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## ACT IV.

SCENE:—*The veranda of the BRICE home.*

TIME:—*Sunday morning.*

*On the left of the stage and occupying about one-third of it is a suburban house with a veranda which has a low railing. In the center of the veranda double glass doors lead to living-room, the backing for these doors is a portion of the second act set. On each side of the door is a pot containing a formal box tree. On the floor of the veranda a rug. At up-stage end of veranda a small wicker armchair, another below the glass doors, and a third at down-stage end of veranda. Between these two chairs against the wall of the house is a small stand with a bowl of flowers, magazines, etc. At the*

*windows of the house are awnings and window boxes. The house and veranda are on a platform two feet high with steps leading to the stage. A white picket fence surrounds the yard with a gate opposite the steps R. C. On each side of the path from the gate to the steps is a border of pansies in bloom. Peonies and fox-gloves in bloom are banked against the picket fence at the rear of stage and against the veranda, the up-stage pillars of which are wreathed with climbing roses. Grass mats simulate the lawn and border the sidewalk outside the picket fence. The back drop is the same as used in the other acts. In addition there are foliage borders, and wood wings representing a row of trees on R. of stage.*

*Discovered:—At rise of the curtain LARRY and SAMMY seated on the veranda. SAMMY on top of steps—he is behind a Sunday paper. LARRY's paper is in his lap—he is the picture of utter wretchedness as he stares straight ahead of him into space. SAMMY turns his paper, takes a sidelong look at LARRY, then lays the paper in his lap and takes out his cigarette case. Nudges LARRY who accepts one. His manner is preoccupied. A pause.*

LARRY. Where do you suppose she was?

SAMMY. (*Wearily—seated on a small straw cushion at top of steps*) Still harping on my daughter.

LARRY. (*Absently*) What daughter?

SAMMY. Oh, just a little thing of Shakespeare's.

LARRY. (*Disgustedly*) What's Shakespeare to do with me and Hetty?

(SAMMY laughs, LARRY glares at him, SAMMY stops abruptly.)

SAMMY. I beg your pardon, I can't help seeing the funny side of everything.

LARRY. The man that can see the funny side of this affair, has a ghoulish sense of humor——

SAMMY. It *is* funny. A big husky kid like you afraid of a little woman. Why don't you kiss and make up?

LARRY. The best I'd get would be a call-down.

SAMMY. Why, Mrs. Brice seemed to be very pleasant at the breakfast table.

LARRY. That's all you know about it. A wife's never so pleasant as when she's laying to hand you one.

SAMMY. Well, if you take my advice——

LARRY. I have had too much of your advice and your fool jokes.

SAMMY. You shouldn't carry a joke too far.

LARRY. I did exactly as you told me.

SAMMY. Did I tell you to drag in jealousy of Dr. Lloyd? That was one of your own little trimmings.

LARRY. As her husband, I've a perfect right to know that my wife was doing out at that hour of the morning.

SAMMY. If you had worked it right she'd have told you. If I'd been talked to by my husband—— told you. If I'd been talked to by my husband.

SAMMY. You know what I mean: flying off the handle, you hurt her pride.

LARRY. That's right, take her part!

SAMMY. She'd have told you, all right.

LARRY. Of course you know it all. (SAMMY *offended, picks up his paper and begins to read*) Can't you see how miserable I am?

SAMMY. I'm not having a particularly hilarious time.

LARRY. You got me into this mess. It's up to you to get me out of it.

SAMMY. I'm no first aid to fool husbands.

LARRY. You're so clever, so full of your little



jokes, joke me out of this. (SAMMY *continues reading*) What's the matter with you this morning? You haven't the brain of a hen.

SAMMY. What do you expect? Locked me out of my room. Let me spend half the night on that couch in there, and then when you did let me share your bed, talked me deaf, dumb and silly. I'm no perennial bright-eyes.

LARRY. I wasn't very hospitable; I'm sorry.

SAMMY. Oh, that's all right.

LARRY. But I can't think of other people's feelings. I've my own to think about. Do you think she'll forgive me?

SAMMY. Now see here, you asked me that question about eighty-seven times last night. I've heard your *sad* story so often that if you'll give me a chord in G minor I could do it as a cantata. How do I know what she'll do? Go ask *her* and let me read about other people's troubles. (*He grasps his paper irritably*)

LARRY. And this is the man I've always treated as a friend!

(HETTY *appears at the door. She is politely frigid in her demeanor. The men rise, SAMMY goes down steps, paper in hand.*)

LARRY. Can I help you wash the breakfast dishes?

HETTY. (*Sitting in chair*) They're washed, thank you.

(LARRY *subsides in his chair. There is a pause.*)

SAMMY. (*Going to her*) Would you care to look at this paper?

HETTY. No, thank you, I'm not in the mood for reading.

SAMMY. Not even the comic section? (*Offering*

her the picture supplement. HETTY looks at him frigidly. SAMMY sneaks back, a strained silence ensues, LARRY and SAMMY steal apprehensive glances at her. SAMMY is smoking) Does this smoke annoy you?

HETTY. Not at all.

*(A strained silence ensues again.)*

SAMMY. If you'll excuse me I'll pack the bag you loaned me. *(Goes up on veranda as if to go into house; picks up the straw cushion he was sitting on at beginning of act)*

HETTY. *(When he is near door)* You're not leaving us, Mr. Fletcher?

SAMMY. *(Coming back to her L.)* Yes, I'll have to take the 11:02.

HETTY. Oh, if your mind is made up——

SAMMY. Oh, yes, my mind's made up. *(SAMMY starts to go. LARRY clutches at his arm and hangs on like grim death)*

LARRY. You can pack that bag later: you've loads of time.

*(SAMMY throws down cushion and paper, and goes back down the steps.)*

SAMMY. It's a pleasant day. *(Pauses)* The flowers are doing well. *(Giggles. A pause)* Great weather for lawns. *(Giggles. A pause)* Doesn't any one use this street on Sunday?

HETTY. I'm sorry you find it dull.

SAMMY. Oh, no, not at all. It's very restful after last night. *(HETTY turns on him. He turns away, angry with himself)* A change from the city, you know. *(A pause)* Funny thing about Sunday. If I were blindfolded and led to a foreign country where I had lost all sense of time and place and were awakened on Sunday, I'd know it by that sabbath

calm. (*Giggles*) You can cut it with a knife.

HETTY. How interesting. (*Yawning*)

SAMMY. Apparently Auburn Manor doesn't stir its stumps on Sunday.

HETTY. (*To SAMMY*) It's the one day in the week when wives can cease from troubling about their (*Severely towards LARRY*) husband's train.

(*LARRY winces; SAMMY looks from one to the other.*)

SAMMY. I must pack that bag. (*He exits quickly*)

(*A pause again: LARRY watches HETTY furtively. A pause, then LARRY rises determinedly and comes to HETTY.*)

LARRY. (*On her L.*) Oh, what's the use of sulking?

HETTY. I'm not sulking, I'm perfectly pleasant. (*She smiles acidly*)

LARRY. Ah, what's the use of keeping this up?

HETTY. I'm not keeping anything up!

LARRY. Then you're not angry?

HETTY. Why should I be angry?

LARRY. I'm very sorry.

HETTY. That's nice.

LARRY. I *was* a beast last night.

HETTY. You were.

LARRY. Oh, well, you weren't so pleasant yourself. (*Turns away L.*)

HETTY. Had I any very especial reason to be pleasant? Insult me, humiliate me, before a stranger—do you expect me to like it?

LARRY. Do you want me to get down and grovel?

HETTY. Not in your Sunday-go-to-meeting suit.

LARRY. Oh, damn the suit. (*Turns up-stage*)

HETTY. Why, it's a very nice suit.

LARRY. Oh, Hetty, let us drop all this! Don't you see how wretched I am?

(HETTY turns and looks at him searchingly.)

HETTY. You look about as usual.

LARRY. I didn't sleep a wink last night.

HETTY. I did—like a top.

LARRY. I wouldn't have believed that you could be so utterly heartless.

HETTY. And I wouldn't have believed that you could be so utterly unjust.

LARRY. There's some excuse: I had that man Fletcher on my hands all evening.

HETTY. You had none the best of me: I had him all day.

LARRY. He's going soon, thank God!

HETTY. Oh, Larry, that isn't nice to talk about your friends. It isn't hospitable.

LARRY. Hospitality be blowed! Come on, Hetty, be a good fellow, say you forgive me. (*He tries to put his arm around her*)

HETTY. Are you sorry, really sorry?

LARRY. Am I?

HETTY. And you won't stay out again?

LARRY. Never.

HETTY. Sure?

LARRY. Cinch. Now that's all settled, say, where were you and Dr. Lloyd last night?

HETTY. (*Rising quickly*) So that's why you made up and begged for forgiveness, to trap me into some admission? you don't trust me now! (*Crosses L.*)

LARRY. (*Interrupting*) Yes—yes.

HETTY. (*Turns*) You don't. I'd have told you in another moment, but now you can find out—(*LARRY tries to explain*) No, no, you've killed my love—(*HETTY exits into house. Enter SAMMY carrying a bag on which are the letters L. B. He*

*stops abruptly, looks after her, and puts hat and bag down)*

SAMMY. (*Cheerily*) Well?

LARRY. I've killed her love! (*Standing in daze.*  
SAMMY *laughs*) If you want to retain the slightest popularity in this vicinity, choke off that insane giggle!

SAMMY. I thought you'd patched it up?

LARRY. I thought I had. (*Sits in chair*)

SAMMY. What happened?

LARRY. I humbled myself, begged her forgiveness. She forgave me and then I did as you told me—asked her where she'd been.

SAMMY. Did as I told you to? Lord, man, I told you not to mention it. I wash my hands of the whole affair.

(*FAN appears on the street, dressed for church.*

SAMMY *sees her as he turns away from LARRY.*)

FAN. (*Outside gate*) Oh, Larry, may I speak to you a moment, please?

LARRY. (*Rises*) Good-morning.

FAN. Hetty telephoned me this morning.

LARRY. What did she say? (*Crosses to gate*)

FAN. Oh, what didn't she say? (*LARRY opens gate, she passes in*) Rollie said it was up to me to come over and square myself. Oh, what's the trouble?

LARRY. Oh, nothing. Hetty's going to divorce me, that's all.

SAMMY. Larry exaggerates the situation.

FAN. I'll learn the situation from Mr. Brice.

LARRY. You know Mr. Fletcher?

(*SAMMY moves forward as if to shake hands with her.*)

FAN. Know him? (*SAMMY draws back*) He's

the cause of it all. I only gave Hetty a little advice.

LARRY. (*To SAMMY*) Everybody's very gay with advice. It's getting to be a habit.

FAN. I'll never interfere again; I only meant it as a joke. (*Crying*)

SAMMY. Pardon me, Mrs. Rolliston, but joke is on the taboo here.

LARRY. (*FAN cries still louder*) Oh, don't cry, Fan.

FAN. (*Goes up on veranda*) I can't help it; I'm an old married woman, but Rollie never talked to me in my life as he did this morning! (*Sits*) But I'm not responsible for Hetty's staying out until half-past two. Where was she?

SAMMY. That's the pulsating question of the hour.

FAN. What could anybody find to do in Auburn Manor until half-past two? Did you ask her?

LARRY. Did I ask her!

FAN. Why, if Rollie asked me about anything I wouldn't dare to refuse to tell him—

LARRY. Rollie has you trained—(*Laugh from SAMMY, LARRY looks at him reprovingly*)

FAN. She was at her mother's.

LARRY. She was not; I 'phoned this morning. Mrs. Graham's on her way here now. Hetty was with Doctor Lloyd.

FAN. But we were bored to death with Dr. Lloyd at half-past nine.

SAMMY. Well, we ain't "gettin' any forrader." Someone of us ought to straighten it out. Here we are, three intelligent people.

FAN. Speak for yourself, please.

LARRY. Oh, Fan, you go to her, beg her to give me another chance.

FAN. Let him go, he's responsible. Hetty's a dear, but you don't know what she can be when she's angry.

SAMMY. Oh, don't I?

LARRY. Fan, you wouldn't see me in the divorce court? Do this for me and I'll do as much for you when you get there.

FAN. (*Turning to him quickly*) Thanks, it won't be necessary, if you'll stop leading Rollie astray.

LARRY. Don't blame me, Fan, it's Sammy.

SAMMY. I'm the goat.

FAN. (*Rises*) Well, I suppose this is my punishment. (*She goes L.*)

SAMMY. Good luck, and the Lord be with you.

(*MRS. GRAHAM enters from house.*)

LARRY. Hello, mater, where did you spring from?

MRS. GRAHAM. I came in the back way. Whatever is the matter with you children? Good-morning, Fan; you telephoned me asking me where Hetty was last night. (*Bows frigidly to SAMMY; LARRY motions her to sit*) Hetty telephoned me to come and see her at once. It's a singular time to upset my nerves. (*Sits in chair above steps on veranda*) It's hardly proper. In fact, it's sacrilegious to quarrel on Sunday.

SAMMY. The better the day——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) I felt that something was wrong. I never dream of black water but I'm sure to awaken to trouble. (*FAN sits in chair down L. on veranda*) Well, I think someone of you might relieve a mother's anxiety—(*All three try to speak*) and not keep me in this fearful suspense. (*All three try to speak*) What has happened to my poor child? (*All three try to speak*) Oh, somebody say something!

SAMMY. We'd like to——

LARRY. You see, mater, it's like this——

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) Oh, for heaven's sake, don't go all over it again.

FAN. It's just this way, Mrs. Graham——

SAMMY. (*Interrupting*) Pardon me, Mrs. Roliston: I was there, and I know. Briefly, Mrs. Graham: dinner at club—arrived home two fifteen—no Mrs. B. Mrs. B. arrives 2:30—Larry asks her where she's been——

MRS. GRAHAM. A perfectly proper question.

SAMMY. Certainly, sometimes. (MRS. GRAHAM *looks at him quickly*) Then Larry sees fit to bring an accusation——

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Of what has he accused the poor child?

SAMMY. Of being out with Dr. Lloyd.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Rising*) How dare you, Larry, impute aught save what is innocent to my daughter?

LARRY. Well, if you came home late at night.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) I never came home late at night. I'm in bed every evening at nine o'clock, except Wednesday evening, prayer meeting. Why should my home coming be dragged in? (*Sits again.* LARRY *groans*)

FAN. But if you should——

MRS. GRAHAM. I tell you I never come home late—a woman of my years! What would I be doing out late at night? Don't be ridiculous, Fan! (FAN *subsides*) Will no one explain all this to me?

SAMMY. Mrs. Brice has been out until half-past two and Larry naturally but foolishly wondered where? Mark the insignificant word "where", that has put this happy home on the blink.

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, what's the man talking about?

SAMMY. She won't tell Larry where she's been.

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't talk nonsense!

SAMMY. Does that broken-hearted man look as though it were nonsense? Mark the anguish.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Interrupting*) Oh, do be quiet! (*Squelches him*) Larry, do you mean to tell me that I've been dragged up here on a hot morning be-



cause of this tomfoolery? You're her husband, insist on her telling you.

LARRY. I tried to, but she won't.

MRS. GRAHAM. Where is she? (*Starts to go into the house*)

LARRY. Mater, you'll have to approach her gently.

MRS. GRAHAM. Gently! my own child! I'll just ask her a plump and plain question, and I'll see to it that I get a plain reply.

FAN. (*Rising*) Oh, I think I'd better go, Mrs. Graham.

MRS. GRAHAM. She's my daughter, Mrs. Rolliston; I hope I know how to deal with my own flesh and blood! (*MRS. GRAHAM starts to go. HETTY appears dressed for church. She has a telegram in her hand; she stops at the sight of the quartette who are momentarily embarrassed*)

HETTY. (*Sarcastically*) Has the jury brought in its verdict?

MRS. GRAHAM. Hetty, I'm surprised at you—If you were true to your up-bringing, a verdict wouldn't be needed. I ask you—(*SAMMY tries to stop MRS. GRAHAM. She resents it*) a simple question: (*HETTY starts resentfully—the others try to stop MRS. GRAHAM*) where were you last night?

HETTY. So you four have been sitting here discussing me! You make our quarrel public property.

FAN. (*Interrupting*) We are your friends, Hetty, and have you and Larry's interest at heart. You should tell us where you were; this has gone far enough.

HETTY. Quite far enough. What right have you, any of you to pry into my private affairs?

MRS. GRAHAM. I am your mother.

HETTY. I am of age, and a wife; I've a right to the freedom of the individual.

MRS. GRAHAM. Don't quote that Mrs. Crane to

me! I always said that woman was a trouble-breeder.

HETTY. (*Ignoring her*) When anything in my conduct calls for question, I'll explain it, and not until then.

FAN. (*Very much offended*) I may have usurped the privilege of a friend, Hetty, but you've equally usurped it. (*Comes down step and joins LARRY*)

HETTY. I'm sorry to have offended you, Fan, but this matter is entirely between Larry and myself.

(*FAN turns away. LARRY joins her and expostulates with her. As FAN moves down, MRS. GRAHAM gets to L. of HETTY.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To HETTY L. of her*) Hetty, I'd like to spank you! (*Comes down steps*)

HETTY. Oh, Mr. Fletcher, here's a telegram for you. (*Gives him telegram*)

SAMMY. When did this come?

HETTY. Last night?

SAMMY. Last night?

HETTY. Yes.

SAMMY. What time was it delivered?

HETTY. (*Indifferently—watching LARRY and FAN*) About ten o'clock.

SAMMY. You received it then:

HETTY. Yes, I meant to give it to you, but I forgot.

SAMMY. Then you were in the house all the time?

LARRY. What!

MRS. GRAHAM. Why on earth didn't you say so?

HETTY. I didn't have a chance.

LARRY. Oh, Hetty. (*Running up steps to HETTY*) Who was in Dr. Lloyd's car last night?

HETTY. The nurse. Didn't you know the Jones's had a new baby?

*(He goes to put his arms around her. Church bells begin; she hands him hat which is on the table. ROLLISTON and MRS. SHIPMAN have appeared up the street, followed by Mr. and Mrs. APPLEBEE and Mr. and Mrs. COLTON. They join Mrs. GRAHAM and FAN and converse. LARRY and HETTY walk along. SAMMY takes up his bag and follows in the tail of the procession Church bells are ringing. The others disappear in this order: FAN and Mrs. SHIPMAN, ROLLISTON and Mrs. GRAHAM, APPLEBEE and COLTON, Mrs. COLTON and Mrs. APPLEBEE, leaving HETTY, LARRY, and SAMMY, who stop at R. I E.)*

LARRY. Oh, so sorry, you must go, Sammy—  
*(Shakes hands)*

HETTY. But you'll come out soon and spend the day?

*(They turn away. SAMMY watches them disappear. A whistle is heard in the distance.)*

SAMMY. Oh, you Broadway! *(He runs up the street in the opposite direction. Church bells swell for curtain)*

CURTAIN.

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO CLOTHES.

**LARRY BRICE.** Juvenile lead, 30 years of age—type of American stock broker—smartly dressed in summer suit—belt—tan shoes—straw hat—

**HETTY BRICE.** Lead—

ACT 1ST—a simple house gown.

ACT 2ND—a white lingerie dress—at end of act small automobile hat.

ACT 3RD—Same dress with a scarf.

ACT 4TH—A simple house gown—changing later to gown, parasol and hat for church.

**CARRIE.** A village girl who has been a waitress in one of the Childs restaurants in New York, and is now a servant in the Brice home—ACT 1ST wears a cotton dress in blue or pink such as worn by maids. An exaggerated hat. Underneath it a very small cap such as worn by waitresses.

ACT 2ND—conventional maid's dress and white apron—no cap.

**MRS. GRAHAM.** Hetty's mother—sweet old woman—very well dressed.

ACT 1ST—A coat suit, silk shirtwaist and small toque.

ACT 2ND—Afternoon gown in light colors with corresponding toque.

ACT 4TH—Gray silk church gown and toque.

**MR. ROLLISTON.** Comedian about 35 years of age—more the family man in appearance and not so smartly dressed as LARRY—blue serge suit and Panama hat.

**MR. COLTON.** Boyish—a “newlywed” very well dressed in light sack suit.

**MR. APPLEBEE.** Stout—middle-aged suburbanite. Dark business suit—straw hat.

**SAMMY FLETCHER.** Comedian—a few years older than LARRY. At his entrance in ACT 1ST he wears evening clothes—white vest—collar and tie loosened—hair disarranged—must have the appearance of having slept in his clothes. In ACT 2ND, he wears an automobile coat of heavy material and several sizes too large—dress trousers—evening shirt—suspenders and four in hand tie. He has discarded coat and vest of evening suit. He changes in this act to smart sack suit and he must be underdressed in sack suit trousers in order to make necessary quick change.

**MRS. JULIA STICKNEY CRANE.** Tall, handsome, with touch of gray in hair—must represent the last word in style—carries a lorgnette on a chain.

**MRS. COLTON.** A young bride—in second act wears simple summer dress—in third act a negligee over petticoat and silk evening wrap.

**MRS. SHIPMAN.** A stout woman about forty—rather suburban in attire.

**MRS. APPLEBEE.** Tall, homely, woman—very æsthetic in appearance—dressed in a loose, “artistic” gown—a large flappy hat with one rose, antique jewelry, bracelets, etc.

**MRS. ROLLISTON.** 35 years of age—very well dressed in afternoon gown.

**POLICEMAN.** Policeman’s uniform—club and helmet.

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*In ACT II, women wear pretty summer gowns and hats suitable for afternoon reception. In ACT IV, summer gowns and hats suitable for church wear. MRS. APPLEBEE same costume as in ACT II.*

*In last act, LARRY, COLTON and ROLLISTON wear black cutaway coats—striped trousers—silk hats, etc. —APPLEBEE wears black frock coat, striped trousers, silk hat, etc.*

## PROPERTY PLOT.

## ACT I.

**ON STAGE—AT RISE—**Painted floor cloth—Center Rug or Medallion—Large center Round Table c. on table—fancy center piece and bowl of flowers  
1 small stand for telephone at R. below sideboard—large sideboard against wall up R. on sideboard—2 pepper and 2 salt shakers—1 muffinier—1 metal cigarette box with 2 cigarettes and matches—other articles to dress. In top drawer—1 serving fork and spoon—2 tea spoons, 2 forks, 2 knives—in lower drawer—1 table cloth and 2 napkins—cabinet (built in scene R. in flat) No. 1 (See diagram) on lower shelf—1 sugar bowl and table bell—on second shelf—2 finger bowls, 2 drinking glasses and two breakfast plates—other articles to dress—Cabinet No. 2 (L. in flat. See diagram) on lower shelf—2 bread and butter plates—on 3rd shelf—2 cups and saucers—other articles to dress—7 chairs—1 R. and 1 L. of C. table—4 chairs against scene L. (2 above and 2 below doors—1 at wall R.—1 above door R. 2 E.)—Curtains on casement window and pots of flowers.

**OFF-STAGE L.—**2 boxes, done up in brown paper, supposed to contain shirt waists and slippers—Train whistle (at cue) 1 alarm clock (Set 7:15)

**OFF-STAGE R. 1 E.—**Kitchen table with following articles ready for characters:

2 daily newspapers (N. Y. Herald and World)—2 dishes of grape fruit (or melon)—1 water pitcher  $\frac{1}{2}$  full of water—1 covered dish with

toast—I covered dish with 2 fried eggs—I cup and saucer (coffee in cup)—I tray with pot of coffee—I cream pitcher and milk pitcher.

OFF-STAGE—Back of c. Windows—grass mats.

## ACT II.

Large Boxed Interior—stairs from center leading up to Balcony on L. of scene—on stage at rise—painted floor cloth and large rug—large square table L. c.—on which are—"Country Life in America"—"American Homes and Gardens" and "The Garden Magazine" (on R.) "Ladies Home Journal" and other magazines (on L.)—In center a bowl of flowers and a picture puzzle—Arm-chair R. of this table—Arm-chair L. of this table—small chair back of table—above this table and against the wall between the coat closet and stairs a small stand on table on which are a lamp and two caps (LARRY's and SAMMY's)—Arm-chair well over and down R. Mantel with ornaments, photos, small clock, etc.—fender fire irons, etc., against fireplace opening R. above window—Large comfortable sofa R. c.—back of this sofa is a large writing table with lamp, writing materials and telephone—small chair back of this table—small table L. of opening—on which are HETTY's hat, parasol (used by MRS. APPLEBEE in burglar scene) and under table on floor a handsome market basket—push button on wall R. between window and mantel. Small stand (for MRS. CRANE's notes) c. Small stand R. fireplace.

OFF-STAGE L.—Ready for character—I small tray with doily and cup of tea and saucer—I large paper bag supposed to contain a woman's hat, an old umbrella and a very small hand bag (all for CARRIE)—bell to ring at cues (same as bell used in ACT I.)

**OFF-STAGE C. and R.**—Material to fill HETTY's basket to appear heavy and covered with napkin and a long loaf of bread with paper wrapped around the middle all for HETTY—a bowl tied up in napkin supposed to contain soup for "Fan."

**SIDE PROPS**—For characters—I silver dollar—for "LARRY"—I policeman's club for "POLICEMAN"—I cigarette case for "SAMMY"—I note book for "MRS CRANE"—I very large overcoat for "SAMMY"—cigarettes for "SAMMY"—Hooks and chair in room upstairs off L. 2 E. for "SAMMY's" change in ACT II—small stand and I chair in room upstairs L. 3 E. for "LARRY's" change in ACT III—In coat closet (back L. under stairs) I or 2 articles of clothing—other articles of furniture, flowers, etc., to dress scene.

### ACT III.

Same set as ACT II—Night—On large table L. c. a metal box of cigarettes—I match stand and an ash tray—2 evening papers (World and Sun) at either end of table. Small clock used on mantel in ACT II and box of chocolates on writing table back of couch—small book for "HETTY" on couch—HETTY's scarf in coat closet (L. under stairs). Candle in stick and box of matches on small stand off-stage—upstairs in room L. 3 E. Auto horn off-stage (up R.) at cue.

### ACT IV.

Full stage—exterior—large house L. Painted floor cloth—Grass mats inside of fence—grass mats long strip to outline street—Rug on Veranda platform)—3 wicker chairs (platform)—I wicker table (platform)

**SIDE PROPS**—I small Japanese straw mat (SAMMY)



—I copy Sunday World (LARRY)—I copy Sunday Herald (SAMMY)—I cigarette case with cigarettes (SAMMY)—I hand traveling bag on which are initials L. B. (SAMMY)—I telegram (HETTY)—I train whistle (at cue off L.)—I chime of church bells at cue up and off R.—Flowers on ground front of verandah—roses on posts and house—awnings on windows—window boxes on lower windows.

NOTE:—The diagram of ACT II shows a small table between the sofa and the fireplace. This is *incorrect*. The table, if used, should be on the R. of fireplace. The clock shown in the diagram should be on the mantel in ACT II. In ACT III it has been placed by HETTY on the table back of sofa. This should be a small gilt clock.

LIGHT PLOT.

ACT I.

Boxed Interior—Early morning.

Foots— $\frac{1}{3}$  Amber—full up—

Borders—1st border  $\frac{1}{3}$  amber—full up—  
4th border—all white—full up.

Strip lights—10 light strip L. 3 E.

5 light strip R. 2 E.

Arc lights—Amber box L. U. E. on drop.

" " R. U. E. on drop.

" " on exterior backing R.

3 E.

Telephone (pract.) on small stand R., between  
door and sideboard.

ACT II.

Boxed Interior—Afternoon—

Foots:— $\frac{1}{3}$  Amber—full up.

Borders—1st border— $\frac{1}{3}$  Amber, full up.

4th border, all white, full up.

Strip lights—single light—in coat closet L. 3 E.  
over the door.

Single lights, in rooms off Balcony L. 2 and  
L. 2 E.

Single lights, in rooms off Balcony L. 2 and  
L. 3 E.

Large lamp with shade on table R.

Large lamp with shade on table back L. (be-  
tween coat closet and stairs.

Two double bracket lamps with shades R. and L.  
above mantel on R. of scene.

Telephone on table R. c. (pract.)

NOTE :—These single lamp strips and lamps on tables  
R. and L. are not used until ACT III.  
Arc Lights—Amber boxes R. and L. U.

## ACT III.

Same Set as ACT II.—Night.

Foots—At rise—Amber  $\frac{1}{3}$  up—

At rise—Whites—out.

At cues—Whites on full.

At cues—Whites out.

At cues—Amber out.

At cues—Both white and Amber on  
full—

At cues—All foots on and off (6  
times)

Borders—None used this act.

Arc lights—I box, blue, from R. U. E. on drop.

I lense, blue from R. U. E. through  
high window.

On at rise and all through scene.

Telephone on table R. C. to be worked at cue  
near end of act.

## ACT IV.

Full Stage—Exterior—Daylight.

Foots—All white and amber—full.

Borders—All white and amber—full.

Strips—2, 10 or 12—light strips on floor behind  
picket fence.

I 2-light strips on backing of house L. 2 E.

I baby lense in door of house to strike chair  
on veranda.

Arc lights—amber box—R. U. E. on drop.

amber box—L. U. E. on drop.

Proscenium lights on this act only.

NOTE:—*For production by amateurs* the sets can be simplified as follows:

ACT I. Substitute at stage L. ordinary door for double glass doors.

Substitute ordinary china cabinets at R. and L. of French windows for built in cabinets.

ACT II. To dispense with stair and balcony use two doors in back flat for bedrooms on balcony. Eliminate double glass doors at back center—making that entrance at R. 1 E., omitting window at R. 2 E. Armchair used by MRS. SHIPMAN in ACT II, can be then placed above door. These alterations will considerably decrease depth of scene, and will necessitate, naturally, a re-arrangement of entrances and exits for the persons in the play, but will not materially affect the “business” or positions during the playing of the scenes.

ACT IV. The platform and veranda can be eliminated and the house set on stage. The furnishings of the veranda can be on the lawn. The picket fence, the row of trees R., the awnings and window boxes can be discarded. These alterations will impair the attractiveness of the scene but will not affect the stage “business.”







# THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

BY  
JAMES FORBES



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York





# THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY

JAMES FORBES

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## THE TRAVELING SALESMAN.

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Produced at the Liberty Theatre, New York,  
August 10, 1908.

NOTE:—The characters arranged in the order in  
which they first speak.

MRS. BABBIT.....	<i>Sarah McVicker</i>
MRS. WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON...	<i>Maud B. Sinclair</i>
BILL CRABB.....	<i>R. C. Turner</i>
WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON.....	<i>Edward Ellis</i>
LUELLA ANN DAWSON....	<i>Frances Golden Fuller</i>
WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, JR.....	<i>Martin Fuller</i>
PERCE GILL.....	<i>Edward M. Dresser</i>
BETH ELLIOTT.....	<i>Gertrude Coghlan</i>
FRANKLIN ROYCE.....	<i>Percival T. Moore</i>
MARTIN DRURY.....	<i>William Beach</i>
A CONDUCTOR.....	<i>I. Lowenthal</i>
BOB BLAKE.....	<i>Frank McIntyre</i>
TED WATTS.....	<i>Arthur Shaw</i>
JULIUS.....	<i>H. D. Blakemore</i>
JOHN KIMBALL.....	<i>Edward Ellis</i>
BEN COBB.....	<i>Nicholas Burnham</i>

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### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

ACT I. The Depot at Grand Crossing, Christ-  
mas Day.

ACT II. BLAKE'S rooms at the Elite Hotel.  
Christmas Night.

ACT III. Office of FRANKLIN ROYCE. Two  
o'clock of the next day.

ACT IV. Same as ACT II. One hour later.



# THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

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## ACT I.

SCENE:—*The depot at Grand Crossing.*

TIME:—*Christmas Day.*

*It is the typical waiting-room of a village depot. The whitewashed walls are discolored by time and smoke. The woodwork is painted a dingy brown. At center back the ticket-office projects onto the stage. The window of the office is practical and on it are the letters "Ticket Window". There is a shelf in front of the window and when the window is raised there can be seen another shelf on the inside of the office. Beneath this shelf is a money drawer. On the shelf at right is a rack filled with railroad tickets. On the shelf left a ticket stamp, a telegraph blank-book with pencil attached to it by string, and an express book. At the rear of the ticket-office is a window, underneath it a shelf on which stands the telegraph instrument. In this window hangs a wreath of holly with red ribbon bow. On the right sash of this window is a small mirror. "BETH'S" hat and coat are hanging on a hook on the right wall inside the ticket-office.*

*In the flat at R. and L. of the ticket-office are doors, the upper halves of them painted to represent glass. On the outside of the glass are the words "Waiting Room". At L. of the door*

*in the back flat and at L. 2 E. are large windows. All the windows in the set are covered with tracing paper to suggest heavy frost and to screen the supposed arrival and departure of trains. The back drop shows a snow-covered landscape with telegraph poles and wires. The ground cloth is painted in imitation of a railroad platform and two lines of railroad tracks. At R. 1 E. is a door to the baggage room, the upper half of the glass with the lettering "Baggage Room".*

*At L. of center and at R. of center are wooden benches in pairs placed back to back and like those that surround the room are divided by iron arms into three seats. Above the benches at R. of C. about R. 2 E. is a rusted iron stove with practical door and fire effect. The stove-pipe leads off-stage R. through the wall of the set. On the up-stage side of the stove, stands a scuttle of coal with shovel and poker. Above the door, at R. 1 E. stands a penny-in-the-slot weighing machine. On the wall below this door is a penny-in-the-slot gum machine and another of a similar character stands on the shelf left of ticket window. L. of the door R. in back flat is a water cooler with tin cup. On the R. wall of the ticket-office is a blackboard announcing the arrival of trains. Below the blackboard is suspended a fire axe. On the shelf of the ticket-office R. is a rack with time tables. Two fire pails stand on shelves at the upper angles of the set. On the wall over the window L. 2 E. is a large clock and on the wall above the window hangs a large railroad map. On the wall below the window is an Express Company sign. Under the shelf of the ticket window is a Money Order sign. Over this window a "No Smoking" sign, and affixed to the right face of this window is a "Tax Sale"*

notice. On the R. wall back of the stove is a "No Loafing" sign and over the door to the Baggage Room a sign reading "Baggage Checked 15 Minutes Before Train Time."

Before the rise of the curtain is heard the noise of a departing train.

As curtain rises, through the closed window of the ticket-office can be heard the sound of the telegraph instrument.

DISCOVERED:—MRS. BABBIT seated on the extreme edge of the bench R. C. Beside her a handbag, a valise and several bundles. Her attitude denotes extreme nervous tension. She looks anxiously at the clock. Enter MRS. DAWSON, LUELLA ANN DAWSON and WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, JR. At the sound of the closing door, MRS. BABBIT turns quickly.

MRS. BABBIT. Did you see a train coming?

MRS. DAWSON. No'm. (MRS. DAWSON and WILLIAM HENRY cross to bench at L. MRS. DAWSON sits. LUELLA ANN stands C., staring at MRS. BABBIT. MRS. DAWSON sees her) Luella Ann, what you gawpin' at. Come over here and sit down. (LUELLA ANN crosses back of bench L. sits left end of bench. MRS. DAWSON is unwinding WILLIAM HENRY's scarf. WILLIAM HENRY whispers to her) Ain't I ever goin' to have a minit's peace? Watcha want? (WILLIAM HENRY whispers again) Another drink! You children's regular sponges. (MRS. DAWSON takes WILLIAM HENRY up to water cooler followed by LUELLA ANN, who stares at MRS. BABBIT)

(Enter BILL CRABB door L. in flat.)

MRS. BABBIT. Say Mr. Crabb, when's the train due?

CRABB. (C.) What train? Think I'm a mind reader?



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MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising*) Train for Bird-in-Hand!

CRABB. (*Crossing MRS. BABBIT to R.*) Bird-in-Hand? 'Leven fifty-three.

MRS. BABBIT. When's it due?

CRABB. Seven minits afore twelve.

MRS. BABBIT. Ain't you the cute little smart Aleck? That joke was old when my grandfather wuz alive.

CRABB. Your *grandfather*? Must be a darned old joke!

MRS. BABBIT. Jest becuz the train is due at 'leven fifty-three ain't no sign it'll arrive then, on your old one-horse railroad.

CRABB. It ain't my railroad.

MRS. BABBIT. You don't say! Why, from the airs you giv yerself, thought you wuz its president.

CRABB. Not yit! Ef I wuz I wouldn't allow old wimmin to loaf 'round the depot worryin' baggage men to death. (*Exits R. I E. MRS. BABBIT follows him furiously*)

(*MRS. DAWSON who has been listening to the discussion smiles and crosses L., followed by the children, to back of bench L. Enter WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON carrying a crock of apple butter. MRS. BABBIT turns quickly.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Land sakes, that the 'leven fifty-three? Oh, good-morning', Mr. Dawson, merry Christmas.

DAWSON. Same to you Mrs. Babbit, and many of 'em. (*He places the crock on the bench L. c.*) Maw, keep the kids out o' this apple-butter. (*Moving c. towards MRS. BABBIT*) You know the wife don't you?

MRS. BABBIT. I haven't had that pleasure.

DAWSON. No? Wife, I thought you know'd Tom Babbit's widow.

MRS. BABBIT. Pleased to make your acquaintance Mrs. Dawson.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Coming down L. of DAWSON*) Pleased to meet you Mrs. Babbit.

DAWSON. You folks kin chin fer awhile, I've got to 'rastle that trunk off that sleigh. (*DAWSON starts to exit door L. in flat. The children run to DAWSON, crying: "I want to go with Paw".*)

DAWSON. Here, go to your Maw.

LUELLA ANN. No, no!

WILLIAM HENRY. No, no!

(*DAWSON exits, LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY follow him up to door.*)

MRS. DAWSON. William Henry! Lueller Ann come here this instant minit!

(*The children stamp their feet and cry.*)

LUELLA ANN. I want to go with Paw.

WILLIAM HENRY. I want to go with Paw.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Rushing up, grabs children, brings them c.*) Lueller Ann go sit down. (*She pushes LUELLA ANN who goes over to L. end of bench*) William Henry, come here. Behave. (*She goes over sits on bench L., WILLIAM HENRY stands R. of her. MRS. BABBIT indicates her horror of the children's actions. A slight pause*) Lovely weather?

MRS. BABBIT. Glad it's fine for Christmas.

LUELLA ANN. Merry Kistmas! Merry Kistmas!

MRS. DAWSON. Lueller Ann hesh yer mouth!

MRS. BABBIT. (*Pointing to WILLIAM HENRY*) Is this the baby?

LUELLA ANN. Yes, he's the baby.

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Furiously*) I ain't the baby!

LUELLA ANN. (*Crossing towards him*) You are so!

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Approaching LUELLA*) I

ain't not a baby. I'll slap your face.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Separating them*) Luella Ann, behave! (WILLIAM HENRY goes up to penny-in-the-slot machine at L. of ticket window. Prods at it. MRS. DAWSON rises takes LUELLA C.) Shake hands with Mrs. Babbit. There's a nice little girl. (LUELLA ANN refuses) Shake hands I say, or I'll shake you good.

LUELLA ANN. (*Crossing in front of her mother puts out her hand to MRS. BABBIT. MRS. BABBIT rises*) Hello.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Shaking LUELLA's hand*) How de do, Luella Ann! (*To MRS. DAWSON*) Favors you about the eyes. She's got her father's nose but she'll outgrow it.

LUELLA ANN. (*In bewildered manner to MRS. DAWSON*) Maw, what's the matter with paw's nose?

MRS. DAWSON. I never noticed nothin' the matter with Mr. Dawson's nose. It may be a trifle large, but he keeps it out of other folks affairs. Come here, you. (*She yanks LUELLA ANN over to the bench. They sit. LUELLA ANN L. of her. WILLIAM HENRY, JR., comes down center from slot machine*)

MRS. BABBIT. What's your name, little boy? (*She takes his hands in hers*)

(WILLIAM HENRY tries to kick her.)

WILLIAM HENRY. I won't tell yer!

MRS. BABBIT. If you were my little boy——

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Interrupting*) I ain't your little boy. (*Jerks hands away*) I don't want to be your little boy. (*Runs to MRS. DAWSON*)

LUELLA ANN. (*Rising*) Maw, I don't like her. (*Sticks out her tongue at MRS. BABBIT. WILLIAM HENRY sees this, does likewise*)

MRS. DAWSON. Hesh! I say hesh up. It's turrible. I can't do nuthin' with 'em.

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MRS. BABBIT. Ever try a bed slat? (*Enter DAWSON carrying tin trunk on his shoulder*) It's their father's fault, their father'll be the ruination of 'em.

DAWSON. That's right. Soak it to me. (*He starts to baggage room, bumps into MRS. BABBIT*)

MRS. BABBIT. Might as well kill a person as scare 'em to death.

DAWSON. Huh! (*Crosses toward door into baggage room*)

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Following DAWSON*) Paw! What's the matter with your nose?

LUELLA ANN. (*Following WILLIAM HENRY*) She—(*Pointing to MRS. BABBIT*) don't like your nose!

DAWSON. Well, she don't have to live with it.

MRS. BABBIT. No, thank my lucky stars! (*DAWSON, LUELLA ANN, and WILLIAM HENRY exit to baggage room. LUELLA sticks her tongue out at MRS. BABBIT as she goes*)

MRS. BABBIT. Going fer?

MRS. DAWSON. Over to mother's. It's about an hour's ride. We always go over every Christmas. An' occasionally on Thanksgiving Day. (*Drawing herself up proudly*) Since I've married I've got to be quite a traveler. (*Pityingly*) You don't go round much do yer?

MRS. BABBIT. Thank God I never was one to gad.

MRS. DAWSON. Yer're livin' at the Elite Hotel I b'lieve.

MRS. BABBIT. Don't know as you'd call it livin'. Cook can't boil water without burnin' it.

MRS. DAWSON. Too bad you had to give up house-keepin', sacrifice yer home.

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, it wasn't such a sacrifice. I kep' boarders fer twelve years. (*Crossing to MRS. DAWSON*) Then help's such a care (*Sarcastically*) 'Course you wouldn't understand you don't keep none.

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MRS. DAWSON. (*Indignantly*) T'ain't that I couldn't if Dawson'd sell his land.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Crossing to MRS. DAWSON, sitting R. of her*) Ain't he got rid of that Junction property yet? He's as stubborn as Beth Elliott.

MRS. DAWSON. I'm no hand to gossip, but they do say that Franklin Royce that's down here for Martin Drury, lookin' after Mrs. Stratton's store since she failed, is very attentive to Beth. Wonder if that won't be a match one of these days. (*She giggles*)

MRS. BABBITT. (*Indignantly*) Nuthin' in it at all.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Resentfully*) You don't say!

MRS. BABBITT. Well, I'd ought to know, bein' Beth's most intimate friend.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Inquisitively*) She's workin' here at the depot ain't she?

MRS. BABBITT. Yes, jest as smart as a steel trap. You ought to see her work that telegraph thing, wonderful technick. Easy as you'd do a day's wash.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Angrily*) Really! You don't say.

(*Enter from baggage room, DAWSON, LUELLA ANN, WILLIAM HENRY and CRABB.*)

DAWSON. Say, what about my check?

CRABB. (*Pointing to sign over door*) All baggage checked fifteen minutes before train time. You kin spell can't yer? It's plain as the nose on your face.

DAWSON. (*Furiously, threatening CRABB*) You leave my nose alone.

CRABB. I ain't techin' it. (*Crosses DAWSON, glares at LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY*) Well!

(*LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY run to their mother at left screaming "Maw! Maw!"*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising*) Ain't you ashamed? A grown-up man pickin' on children. You outer be reported.

CRABB. Go on, do it. You ain't much else to do. (*Crosses up to door L. in flat. MRS. BABBIT following him*)

MRS. BABBIT. Mind you let me know when the 'leven fifty-three arrives or I'll have you fired. (*CRABB exits slamming door in her face*) Ain't he ornery little shrimp

(*Automobile heard off L.*)

DAWSON. That's Perce Gill in his atmobeel.

(*MRS. DAWSON followed by LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY rush to window L.*)

WILLIAM HENRY. Maw I want to see.

LUELLA ANN. I want to see what's tootin', Paw! (*Climbs on bench. MRS. DAWSON lifts WILLIAM HENRY up on bench*) He ain't tootin Paw make him toot it.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Looking out window*) Which of the wimmin is Mrs. Gill?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Looking out window over MRS. DAWSON's shoulder*) The one Mr. Gill's payin' no attention to.

MRS. DAWSON. Ain't they dressed to madness? What's them things on their eyes.

DAWSON. Blinders! All women ought to wear 'em.

MRS. BABBIT. Guess most married wimmin'd be easier in their minds if they did. (*Enter PERCE GILL door L. in flat. MRS. BABBIT turning quickly from window*) Is that the 'leven fifty-three? Oh, how de do, Mr. Gill. Merry Christmas.

GILL. Same to you, widder. (*Joins DAWSON at c.*) Hello, Dawson, Merry Christmas.

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DAWSON. Same to you Perce!

GILL. (*To MRS. DAWSON who has come down L. to L. of bench*) Why how de do, Mrs. Dawson.

MRS. DAWSON. How de do, Mr. Gill. Merry Christmas.

LUELLA ANN. (*Running to GILL at c.*) Merry Kistmas! Merry Kistmas!

GILL. (*Picking her up in his arms and swinging her around to his right*) Same to you Luella Ann. Got a kiss for me to-day?

LUELLA ANN. (*Kissing him*) One frum me, (*Kissing him again*) and one frum Santa Claus.

GILL. Well, Santa Claus didn't bring me nothin' better'n that. (*He turns to WILLIAM HENRY, JR., who has followed LUELLA ANN to c.*) How's William Henry, Jr.?

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Frightened at goggles and fur coat, runs to MRS. DAWSON*) Oh, Maw, I'll be good, I'll be good!

LUELLA ANN. (*Following WILLIAM HENRY*) Cry baby! Scardey cat! (*Turning back to GILL*) I ain't afraid o' you. (*Laughs loudly*) Oh, Maw, don't he look like a Teddy Bear?

MRS. DAWSON. Don't be forward Lueller Ann.

DAWSON. (*Moving to front of bench R.*) Ain't that kid the caution?

GILL. (*Moving over toward bench R.*) Chip o' the old block! Takin' a trip Dawson?

DAWSON. Not very fer!

LUELLA ANN. (*At c.*) We're goin' over to granmas. To show her what Santa Claus brought me. I got a dolly.

WILLIAM HENRY. (*Coming to R. end of bench L.*) I got a sled.

LUELLA ANN. And new pants. They used to be Paw's. (*Raising her skirts*) I got new pants too!

WILLIAM HENRY. They used to be maw's.

(*GILL and DAWSON laugh loudly. MRS. BABBIT is horrified and MRS. DAWSON much embarrassed.*)

MRS. DAWSON. (*Running to LUELLA*) Lueller Ann put down your clothes this instant minit. You're much too big a girl. (*She takes LUELLA ANN over to bench under window L. 2 E.* WILLIAM HENRY *joins them*)

MRS. BABBIT. How's folks, Mr. Gill?

GILL. Oh, prosperous—(*Laughs*)

DAWSON. (*Going up back of bench R.*) I should think so—that atombeel must a set you back a few—

GILL. (*Moving R. above bench*) Oh, a few hundreds—(*Gives DAWSON cigarette*)

MRS. BABBIT. A fool and his money soon parted—(*Goes up to slot machine L. of ticket window*)

GILL. We're here only onct—

MRS. BABBIT. Lucky for you. At the rate you're goin', if you had to come back you'd be eatin' cobble-stones—(*Working slot-machine*)

GILL. Look a here, widder, I ain't spendin' your money—

MRS. BABBIT. You bet you ain't—you nor no other man—

(CRABB *enters R. door in flat with tire.*)

CRABB. Here's your tire—(*Leans tire up against L. bench R.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Say, you, my penny's in that box—(*Coming to c.*)

CRABB. Well, what about it?

MRS. BABBIT. There's this about it—I put my money in there—(*Moving down c.*) and got nothin' for my pains. That machine's a lying snare—

CRABB. It ain't workin'—(*Winks at GILL and DAWSON*)

MRS. BABBIT. There ain't much about this depot as is workin'—

CRABB. Well, you've been workin' your jaw considerable—



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MRS. BABBIT. I'm not the woman to stand by and left you or anybody else rob me! (*Goes to window and pounds on it; it is raised to disclose BETH ELLIOTT*)

(CRABB moves across front of bench R., near his exit R. I E.)

MRS. BABBIT. Why, Beth Elliott, you've been here all this time——

BETH (*Leaning out of window*) What's the matter?

MRS. BABBIT. My penny's in the box——

DAWSON. Oh, quit fussin', it's only a penny. (*Crossing to R. of ticket-window*)

BETH. The penny sometimes sticks. (*Going out of ticket office to slot machine. As she starts CRABB looks as though tired of it all*)

MRS. BABBIT. Very likely, I'm not castin' any insinuations, but I'd find out where it sticks—(*Looks at CRABB*)

(CRABB exits R. I E. shaking his fist at MRS. BABBIT.

BETH gives MRS. BABBIT chewing gum.)

MRS. BABBIT. How are you, dear?

BETH. Fine—how are you?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Proceeds to eat chewing gum*) My dispepsy's killing me—(*Crossing to bench L. BETH back in office*)

GILL. Too much riotous livin', widder——

MRS. BABBIT. (*Moving down to upper bench L.*) Guess you never took your meals steady at the Elite—(*Sits with back to audience*)

DAWSON. Well, how is business, Beth?

BETH. Very slow to-day—who cares to leave home on Christmas Day—where to?

DAWSON. Over to Mother's—(*Getting money*)

(BETH gets two tickets, stamps them, etc. ROYCE enters L. door in flat.)

DAWSON. (*At R. of ticket window*) Hello, Royce—

ROYCE. (*Comes down. Accosts everyone*) Hello, Dawson—Mrs. Babbit—(*Crosses to ticket window*) How do you do, Miss Elliott?

BETH. How do you do, Mr. Royce? Did you receive the telegram I delivered this morning?

ROYCE. To meet Mr. Drury here—yes. Have you received orders to flag that through train for him?

BETH. Yes, I've attended to it—

GILL. (*Moving over L. end of bench R.*) Thought that was your boss, old Martin Drury, I passed just outside the town. (*Getting tire and carrying it over L. shoulder*) He goin' to take a train to-day?

ROYCE. Yes.

GILL. Well, I hope he gets here—he's riding in one of them Junction hacks—(*All laugh. Moving to L. of window—ROYCE crosses to stove*) See your land's up for sale again, Beth?

BETH. Yes, to-morrow—the taxes haven't been paid for years.

GILL. Well, if the township ain't been able to find a buyer in all these years I guess you needn't worry—anyway it ain't worth nothin'.

BETH. Father was sure it would be valuable some day.

GILL. Well, what your paw didn't know about land would fill a book—

MRS. BABBIT. (*Turning where she sits*) What do you know about it, shiftless critter, careerin' around the country lettin' your land go to the dogs!

GILL. Maybe—but my women-folks don't punch tickets for a livin'—(*MRS. BABBIT sits around and subsides*) Seems a pity to see a nice girl like Beth wastin' herself in a railroad office when there's so

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many men that'd like to take her out of it, eh, Dawson? And guess if rumor's true she wouldn't have so a<sup>ll</sup> fired far to go, eh, Royce? (*BETH puts down window in ticket office. GILL laughs loudly at his own thrust*) Come out and see me shoe my nag—(*Exits followed by DAWSON*)

MRS. DAWSON. Comin', Mrs. Babbit. (*Exits, followed by LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY*)

(*BETH comes out of ticket-office, carrying express book, crosses to baggage room and exits. Enter DRURY L. door in flat.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rises—to DRURY*) Excuse me—did you see my train comin'?

DRURY. I wasn't looking for it, Madam.

(*Enter CRABB with flag. Comes to c.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Would you let me know when it's eleven fifty-three? (*Looks at CRABB*) Can't trust that loafer of a baggageman—

CRABB. Nobody ast you to. (*Shakes flag at her*)

MRS. BABBIT. Speak when you're spoken to—(*CRABB and MRS. BABBIT exit. CRABB exits door R., back. MRS. BABBIT door L. back*)

ROYCE. (*Coming to R.*) Your wire was a surprise, Mr. Drury: thought you'd been spending Christmas with your family—

DRURY. (*Down to ROYCE*) Can't let holidays interfere with business.

ROYCE. Coming over to the store.

DRURY. (*Taking out watch*) Haven't time—my train will be here in a minute I've been over to the Junction, picking up a little something from Santa Claus—

ROYCE. Oh, you don't want to see me about the store?

DRURY. (*Moving to bench L., sits*) I've got

another job for you, something in the real estate line——

ROYCE. (*Crosses to bench and sits*) Anything you say, Mr. Drury.

DRURY. Now listen to me. (*Both sit on bench*) Then keep a close mouth about it; the railroad's got a deal on foot. I've been tipped off that they're going to put another spur of tracks through at the Junction.

ROYCE. They don't know that down here.

DRURY. Don't interrupt me with fool remarks! Of course they don't. Think the railroad is advertising what they're going to do? I've a man at headquarters, and he and I are going to milk that railroad dry. I hustled down here this morning to look the ground over, found that the piece they need is to be sold to-morrow by the township, for accumulated taxes.

ROYCE. Who's the owner?

DRURY. I was told it's known as Elliott's Stone Pile.

ROYCE. Elliott—why, that must be Beth Elliott's land.

DRURY. Who's she? Where is she?

ROYCE. Here.

DRURY. What?

ROYCE. She's the operator at this depot.

DRURY. We must have that land before the railroad can reach her.

ROYCE. Why don't you make her an offer for it here, now?

DRURY. Why? You can go over to-morrow and buy it in; all you've got to do is to pay the taxes. They can't amount to more than a few hundred dollars.

ROYCE. (*Rises and crosses c.*) I don't like the job.

DRURY. Oh, I see, a little bit taken with the girl! Don't be a chump, Royce. Women are strewed

around for the asking ; but in this world it's money ; cold, hard money, that talks.

ROYCE. (*Sitting again*) What do I get out of it?

DRURY. I can't appear in the deal, it might get too warm for my friend at headquarters ; I'll declare you in on it.

ROYCE. I may queer myself with her.

DRURY. Not if I know anything about women. Man's more attractive backed up by a little money, and I've never found them inquisitive as to where you get it. Well, are you with us. (*Whistle*) It's you or some other man.

ROYCE. I don't know——

DRURY. Guess that's my train. (*Crosses to c.*)

ROYCE. (*Rises and Crosses to DRURY*) I'll take it on.

DRURY. That's good. (*BETH enters R., comes quickly back of DRURY and ROYCE and exits to ticket office. ROYCE points to BETH. DRURY looks at her*) Now you pump that girl ; I'll be down in the afternoon on the 2:15.

(*Train effect louder. BETH opens ticket window.*)

MRS. BABBIT enters door L. in back flat.)

MRS. BABBIT. That my train?

(*ROYCE and DRURY look at her, laugh, and exit quickly, door R. in back flat.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rushes to bench—picks up bundles, drops one on way to door, etc., looks out door*) THAT MY TRAIN?

OUTSIDE VOICE. Yes, if you're going to Indianapolis.

MRS. BABBIT. You keep a civil tongue in your head. (*Train pulls out. MRS. BABBIT goes to bench and drops bundles. Enter GILL*)

GILL. Say, Miss Beth, got a crowbar handy?

BETH. No—what's the matter?

GILL. Machine's out a wack. Kin I borrow this poker?

BETH. Certainly.

(GILL gets poker at stove R.)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Moving up back of bench R.*)  
Better take the axe.

GILL. Good idea. (*Gets axe at R. of railroad ticket window*) When an atmobeel gets balky you never kin tell what will come in handy. (*Crossing to L.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Coming L., front of ticket window*) Well, if I owned one of them pesky contrapshuns seems to me I'd know enough to doctor it.

GILL. (*At door L. in flat*) Oh, you would, would you? Well, if you know so all-fired much, maybe, you'll come out and give us the benefit of your valuable advice.

MRS. BABBIT. I will. (*Coming close to GILL*) I'm no mechanic, but I ain't run a sewing machine for twelve years without knowin' somethin' about machinery! (*MRS. BABBIT exits, followed by GILL*)

(BETH crosses to window over L. from ticket office. ROYCE enters from door R. in flat; stops in front of ticket window, looks in, then sees BETH.)

BETH. Oh, I do hope they'll be careful. (*Looking out window*)

ROYCE. Careful? Of what?

BETH. Mrs. Babbit's pokin' around that automobile—(*Looking at ROYCE*) and I'm afraid it will go off, or something. (*Looking out window*)

ROYCE. Oh, I wouldn't worry.

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BETH. I don't want to lose the only friend I have.

ROYCE. Only friend? What about me?

BETH. Oh, you!

ROYCE. Don't I count for anything? Gill seemed to think so with his obvious hints that I wished to marry you.

BETH. That's country humor. (*Coming c.*)

ROYCE. Suppose I considered it a serious suggestion?

BETH. What good would that do—if I consider it a humorous one?

ROYCE. It goes against the grain to see you work.

BETH. Why shouldn't I work? I'm well, strong (*Moving to R. bench L.*) and moderately happy.

ROYCE. Moderately!

BETH. Well, if a placard (*Pointing to placard*) advertising the sale of all you possess in the world was staring you out of countenance, you wouldn't be exactly joyful, would you?

ROYCE. Oh, is your land to be sold? (*Going up to placard*)

BETH. The township will offer it for sale again to-morrow.

ROYCE. Can't you pay your taxes? (*Reading placard*)

BETH. I haven't enough money.

ROYCE. (*Meaningly*) Much due on it? (*Moving down c.*)

BETH. That depends on what "much" signifies; four hundred dollars is a fortune to me——

ROYCE. (*Meaningly*) Do you think anyone's likely to go over to the Junction to-morrow and bid it in?

BETH. My friends know how much it means to me, and they wouldn't take advantage of me. Besides, if anyone did, I should be furiously angry.

ROYCE. (*Moving toward her*) I don't believe

you could; you're so invariably charming that I can't imagine you different.

BETH. I'd be different, all right! (*Moving up-stage*)

ROYCE. (*Moving up to her*) Would you really put up a fight?

BETH. Would I? I'd give the person who tricked me out of my land the surprise of his life.

ROYCE. I think that's a bluff. I'm sure you'd be like every other woman: admire the man who defeated you.

BETH. That shows how little you know Beth Elliott. (*Going into office. Enter MRS. BABBIT L. door in flat*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*To ROYCE*) I can't stay out there catching chillblains just to see Perce Gill break his neck, (*Moving down to bench R. ROYCE crossing L. by bench*) though it'd be a good riddance to the community and at the same time a real pleasure to me.

BETH. Did you fix the machine?

MRS. BABBIT. Certainly: after they all got through with their crowbars, I just jabbed something with a hairpin. (*Sits down on bench R.*)

BETH. (*To ROYCE*) Did you want to see me about anything in particular?

ROYCE. No—just to say Merry Christmas. (*Coming to ticket-window*)

BETH. (*Indifferently*) Merry Christmas.

ROYCE. Now that I've said it, I'll be going along. When do you shut up shop?

BETH. (*Indifferently, fixing change in drawer*) Crabb comes on duty in the afternoon.

ROYCE. May I come back to walk home with you?

BETH. If you care to. (*Fixing tickets in rack*)

ROYCE. That means?

BETH. (*Carelessly, not looking at him*) Just what it says. Good-bye.



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(MRS. BABBIT *laughs to herself.*)

ROYCE. (*Staggered*) Good-bye. Good-morning, Mrs. Babbit, pleased to have seen you. (*Exit door L. in flat*)

MRS. BABBIT. I can't abide that man.

BETH. (*Coming out of office, down to Mrs. Babbit*) Oh, he's very agreeable.

MRS. BABBIT. So is Satan; I hope you ain't goin' to take up with him.

BETH. (*Back of bench*) Oh, dear, no.

MRS. BABBIT. It ain't his fault; he's wore a beaten track ever since he's been here, from this depot to the store, and I notice you go to his office considerable.

BETH. That's business: Mr. Royce receives a great many telegrams, and it's part of my work to deliver them.

MRS. BABBIT. Of course I've no right to interfere.

BETH. (*Putting arm around her*) You couldn't interfere.

MRS. BABBIT. I s'pose I'm an old busybody?

BETH. (*Putting her cheek against Mrs. Babbit's*) You're an old dear.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Looks more pleasant*) Glad somebody thinks so. Tom Babbit aluz said I had the disposition of a crab-apple, (*Turning to Beth, taking her hand*) but you mean a lot to me, dearie, and I don't want you to throw yourself away.

BETH. On Mr. Royce! (*Crossing towards c.*)

MRS. BABBIT. I never could trust a man so all-fired polite—'tain't natural! I'm not one to gossip, but they do say him and Martin Drury beat Mrs. Stratton out of the store.

BETH. Why did she let herself be robbed? I wouldn't!

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising*) But you got *spunk*

—that's why I allus liked you. (*Crossing to BETH*) When your Paw died you didn't set around and cry, you got out and hustled, though you know I allus tell you my foldin' bed's big enough for both of us.

BETH. Yes, I know; bless your heart, but you liked me because I've a home of my own.

MRS. BABBIT. Home—hm! It seems like slanderin' the word to apply it to Mrs. Tompkins' boardin-house. Where's your dinner?

BETH. In here. (*Going into office, picks up dinner basket, shows it to MRS. BABBIT*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Following BETH up to ticket window*) Lands' sakes, it ain't right, you'd oughter be eatin' side a some good man! Why don't you take up with some nice fellers around here? It ain't for want of a chance, for I never seed in all my life so many men shoppin' for railroad tickets. (*Crosses R. back of bench R.*)

(*Enter GILL with the axe which he returns to its place. He is followed by MRS. DAWSON, LUELLA ANN and WILLIAM HENRY who carries the poker and exits unobserved, into baggage room. MRS. DAWSON comes down and sits on bench L., LUELLA ANN beside her. GILL crosses back to ticket window.*)

GILL. By gosh, Miss Beth I clean forgot to pay the charges on them tires. How much?

BETH. A dollar ten.

GILL. Them machines do certainly burn up money. (*Gives her bill*) Must take a spin with me some day.

BETH. (*Giving him change*) I'd like to, Mr. Gill.

MRS. BABBIT. Want to kill her? Well, when yer dead and gone, remember I warned yer. (*GILL exits, whistle blows off L., distant noise of approaching train. DAWSON enters excitedly*)

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DAWSON. Come on, Maw. (MRS. DAWSON *starts for the door*) Bring the bundles—the bundles! (Exits)

MRS. DAWSON. (*Rushing back to bench, grabbing bundles*) I'm so excited I don't know where I'm at. (*Looking around*) I can't find my little grip. Mrs. Babbit, Mrs. Babbit give me a hand! (MRS. DAWSON *rushes up to door L. in flat. Calling off*) Paw, Paw, my little grip!

(MRS. BABBIT *drops her bundle on bench R., crosses to C. MRS. DAWSON comes down L. of bench L. LUELLA ANN runs up to door L. in flat. Exits.*)

CRABB. (*Off-stage*) All aboard! All aboard! Eleven fifty-three. (*Enters door R. in flat*)

MRS. BABBIT. Someone hold that train!

CRABB. (*Coming down to MRS. BABBIT C.*) All aboard, 'leven fifty-three.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Turning on him furiously*) Don't stand there, you big lummix, give us a hand!

(Exit CRABB R. door in flat.)

MRS. DAWSON. (*Running up to door L. in flat*) Paw, Paw, my little grip. I can't find my little grip.

(Enter DAWSON door L. in flat, comes down by bench center, followed by LUELLA ANN.)

DAWSON. What's the matter with you? What have you lost?

MRS. DAWSON. My little grip!

(MRS. BABBIT *picks up valise R. of bench L., turning quickly jams it into DAWSON'S stomach.*)

DAWSON. (*Grabbing it from her*) Is this the one?

MRS. DAWSON. No, my *little* grip.

(Enter CONDUCTOR L. door in flat. Stands left of door.)

CONDUCTOR. All aboard!

MRS. BABBIT. Hold that train. It's life or death.

DAWSON. (*Picking up small grip underneath bench L.*) Here it is right in front of yer eyes. You wimmin can't find nuthin'.

MRS. DAWSON. Of course, I'm to blame.

DAWSON. Come on here. (*He starts for door L. in flat, followed by MRS. DAWSON and LUELLA ANN*)

CONDUCTOR. Get a move on!

DAWSON. Don't give me none of your lip.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Separating them*) That's right, pick a fuss. (*DAWSON exits. MRS. DAWSON grabs LUELLA's hand, puts out other hand for WILLIAM HENRY. He is not there*) My Gawd! Where's the baby?

(Enter CRABB, R. door in flat. MRS. DAWSON and MRS. BABBIT rush to him. Both crying: "Where's the baby?" CRABB stands bewildered. CONDUCTOR keeps calling "All aboard". Presently from door to baggage room enter WILLIAM HENRY, carrying a red flag over his shoulder.)

WILLIAM HENRY. All aboard! All aboard!

(MRS. BABBIT grabs WILLIAM HENRY spansks him. CRABB jerks the flag from WILLIAM HENRY's hand, MRS. DAWSON grabs him and shakes him. DAWSON appears at door yelling "Come on". CONDUCTOR continues to yell "All aboard", WILLIAM HENRY cries loudly, the DAWSON family clamber on train.)

CRABB. (*To MRS. BABBIT*) All aboard, 'Leven fifty-three.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Catching sight of crock of apple butter forgotten in the excitement*) Don't bother me. (*Picks up crock, rushes to door*) Mrs. Dawson! Mrs. Dawson! Here's your apple butter! (*CONDUCTOR grabs the crock from her*) Good-bye—Good-bye! (*The CONDUCTOR slams the door in her face. MRS. BABBIT comes down wearily, sits bench L. Effect of departing train. MRS. BABBIT looks up at clock. To CRABB*) Say, when does that 'Leven fifty-three go?

CRABB. (*Shrieking with laughter*) It's jest gone!

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising quickly*) What? (*Chases CRABB off through door to Baggage Room*)

BETH. (*Coming out of office*) Why, Mrs. Babbit, aren't you going!

MRS. BABBIT. (*Furiously*) Oh, no, I'm not going, just loafin' around the depot. (*Picks up bundles one after the other*)

BETH. Oh, I'm so sorry.

MRS. BABBIT. That's your reward for a healthful, self-sacrificing nature! Drat that Dawson woman; I wish I had her here for five minutes!

BETH. There is a later train. (*Going back to ticket-office*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Putting cape on and getting bundles*) I'll get even with this road: give me back my dollar thirty-three; just for spite I won't go. (*Gets ticket out of bag, slams it on shelf of window. Crossing to ticket office*)

BETH. (*At window of ticket-office*) It's too bad. (*Takes ticket*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Crying*) I'm a poor unfortunate, spendin' Christmas in a hotel room! Not a soul to pass me a kind word.

BETH. (*Giving MRS. BABBIT money for ticket*) Never mind, I'll come over to-night and we'll cheer up together.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Taking money*) Do.

BETH. Good-bye for the present.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Crossing to door L. in flat*)  
Good-bye—good-bye. (*Stops*) Say — say — my  
trunk's on that train. (*Walking toward office*)  
You telegraph for it; I ain't got a clean night-  
gown to my back! (*Exits door L. in flat*)

(*BETH lays her head on the counter and laughs heartily. Enter BLAKE U. L., a typical city drummer. He has a dress-suit case and umbrella. He comes to window. BETH has her head buried in her arms laughing; she doesn't hear him; there is a pause. BLAKE looks at her for a moment, then the contagion of her laugh strikes him and he joins in. BETH raises her head; they look at each other.*)

BLAKE. (*Standing L. of window. Facing front in the entire scene*) Go on, enjoy yourself, don't mind me. (*Putting grip down*)

BETH. What can I do for you?

BLAKE. Put me close to that joke—it must be good——

BETH. Sir?

BLAKE. I beg your—(*Bowing to her*) pardon.  
When does the next train go?

BETH. North or South?

BLAKE. Search me!

BETH. Sir?

BLAKE. (*Turning*) I—(*Bowing*) beg your  
pardon—but, I don't know which is which: my  
bump of locality's a dimple.

BETH. Where did you come from?

BLAKE. I got off that train just as it pulled  
out.

BETH. Where do you wish to go?

BLAKE. (*Strong*) Back.

BETH. How far?

BLAKE. Search me.

BETH. This is a depot, not a customs-house. (*She turns away to telegraph instrument on shelf at back of ticket office*)

BLAKE. (*To himself. Moving down stage to R., bus. hand to jaw, etc.*) That rang the bell—(*Turning up*) See here, Miss, I beg your pardon, (*BETH comes to window*) but I must have come from somewhere. (*Going up to window at R. of window, and facing audience*)

BETH. (*Freezingly*) Presumably—you're a stranger to me.

BLAKE. I can remedy that. See here, my good girl.

BETH. I am not your good girl!

BLAKE. I'm not to blame for that. (*BETH is indignant*) I beg your pardon, but I'm lost.

BETH. How careless! (*BLAKE gets in front of window. CRABB enters R. I E. from baggage-room*) Oh, Mr. Crabb (*To BLAKE*) stand to one side, please. (*BLAKE goes R. a little, to stove*) Now, don't hurry over your dinner, Mr. Crabb, I have mine here. Have a good time with the kiddies. (*CRABB passing window to door L. in flat*) Wait, I have something for them. (*CRABB stops, looks at clock. BETH takes out a package wrapped in tissue-paper and decorated with holly and red ribbon*) Give them my love and a Merry Christmas!

CRABB. (*Coming to window, wipes hands on trousers*) Thank you, Miss—thank you. (*Exits door L. in flat*)

BLAKE. She's a nice little party. (*Sings*) "Gee I wish I had a girl." (*He crosses to window; as he reaches it, BETH closes it*) Going down! Blake, you're in wrong—(*BLAKE goes to the R. window and taps meekly, then he taps again; BETH opens it quickly*)

BETH. This office is closed except for the trans-

mission of telegrams. (*She starts to close the window; BLAKE stops her with left hand*)

BLAKE. All right, me for transmitting! (*Lays umbrella on ledge of window. BETH pulls a pad of telegraph blanks and a pencil tied with a string; shoves them toward him indifferently, looks over his head. BLAKE smiles and looks at her. BETH turns away, frowning*) Cold, to-day. (*Looks at her again, smiling and turns away*) Colder with occasional snow. (*Fishes for pencil which dangles at end of string*) What's the date? (*Starts to write*)

BETH. I believe Christmas usually falls on December 25th.

BLAKE. (*Lays down pencil*) You must think me foolish.

BETH. You weren't in my thoughts.

BLAKE. (*Quickly bends over to write*) What's this place?

BETH. Grand Crossing.

BLAKE. Why, that's where I want to go. (*Pushing telegraph pad*)

BETH. Don't let me detain you. (*Turns up to telegraph instrument*)

BLAKE. (*Turning and stepping down a bit, then directly to window*) I was out last night but I wasn't bad. Now wait a minute. I woke up as we left the last stop an' I distinctly heard some yap articulate, Grand Crossing.

BETH. (*Comes back to window*) That was Grand Crossing Junction.

BLAKE. You must think me stupid.

BETH. (*Witheringly*) How could I? (*BLAKE looks front. The instrument begins to tick loudly. BETH turns to it. BLAKE looks at her*) That is the Junction calling now? (*BLAKE crosses to L. of window*) Is your name Blake?

BLAKE. Yes.

BETH. What's your first name?



BLAKE. Are we going to tell real names?  
(*Looking through window*)

BETH. A Mr. Watts, Ted Watts, wants to know if you are Bob Blake?

BLAKE. That's my number. (*Looking front—loud laugh from BETH*) What does he say?

BETH. (*Coming to window*) He was describing you. It's so funny.

BLAKE. Do I fit it?

BETH. Yes, that's why it is so funny.

BLAKE. Don't you dare identify me! I'll punch his fat head. I wired him to meet me here. What'd he go over to the Junction for?

BETH. I'm not in Mr. Watts' confidence. I suppose you gave him Junction time and some trains stop there that go through here.

BLAKE. Isn't that a hit? It's a wonder that he wouldn't have looked it up and found out if I were right! Isn't it funny how stupid some people are?

BETH. What shall I wire?

BLAKE. Just say, Hello, Wattsie! (*BETH smiles, turns up to ticker. Pause*) Tell him to bring over my trunks and meet me at the hotel. What's he say now?

BETH. (*Coming to window*) The Junction says he can't repeat it to a lady. (*Look at each other seriously, then both laugh, BLAKE loudly*)

BLAKE. There is a hotel?

BETH. The Elite.

BLAKE. Oh, say not so! The Elite! Can't you see it? (*BETH starts to close the window*) Just a minute, is the lunch counter transmitting?

BETH. We haven't such a luxury.

BLAKE. Where is the nearest coaling station?

BETH. You can have a lovely Christmas dinner at the Elite.

BLAKE. Elite doesn't listen well. Watts won't

get back in time. Isn't it awful to eat your Christmas dinner alone?

BETH. Oh, I don't know. I am obliged to eat mine alone.

BLAKE. Oh, no, you're not: I'll eat with you. (*Swinging round, looking in window*)

BETH. You're what I might call——

BLAKE. Fresh, sure I am. You don't like stale men, do you? Come on, what's the use of being lonesome apart? Let's be miserable together. (*Facing window*)

BETH. You're not very flattering.

BLAKE. (*Walks round, down-stage to L.*) I don't dare be—you'll jump on me.

BETH. (*Laughing in spite of herself*) You funny man!

BLAKE. What, funny to you, or funny to look at? (*Facing her*)

BETH. Fishing. I'm going to take pity on you: Miss Beth Elliott requests the pleasure of Mr. Blake——

BLAKE. (*Bowing to her with hat in hand*) Bob to you, Bob to you! (*Comes to window*)

BETH. Mr. "Bob" Blake's company to luncheon immediately.

BLAKE. (*Bowing hat off*) Mr. Bob Blake accepts Miss Beth—short for Elizabeth? (*Turning front*) Sweet name, "Beth"——

BETH. (*Getting basket*) I just escaped being Lizzie. (*Takes cover off basket*) It looks awfully good.

BLAKE. (*Meaningly*) Looks good to me.

BETH. You like turkey?

BLAKE. (*Looking at her*) I wasn't looking at the turkey.

BETH. That's just where you'd better look, young man.

BLAKE. Will I come in there?

BETH. No, against the rules.

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BLAKE. (*Crossing to R. of window, taking off hat*) Let me get in the bread-line.

BETH. What are you doing?

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) Oh, this isn't a hand out, it's to be a buffet lunch.

BETH. (*Interrupting*) We'll eat over there. (*Pointing to bench R.*)

BLAKE. (*Putting hat on*) Oh, going to be a regular party! Can I help you? (*Reaching for basket, she takes it away*)

BETH. Yes, put some coals on the fire.

BLAKE. Well, I'm the cutest little fireman! (*BETH crosses in to R. with lunch during stove business. BLAKE takes handle of stove door—fingers burned—then looks at her, catching her laughing at him. Picks up coal scuttle*) Ain't I the handiest little thing around the house? (*He empties scuttle, but as he is looking at BETH the coal falls on the floor*)

BETH. (*Holding up glass which she has taken from basket*) Oh, there's only one glass.

BLAKE. That's all right, I'll drink out of the bottle.

BETH. Oh, you can't drink anything out of a bottle.

BLAKE. I don't know. (*Taking off coat*)

BETH. Possibly you've had more experience?

BLAKE. My dear young—operator, I had you there! (*Putting down hat and coat on up-stage bench R. Coming down to L. of bench*) I'm not so crazy about bottled goods.

BETH. (*Sitting extreme R. of bench R. Basket on bench L. of her*) That's good.

BLAKE. I'm glad you feel that way. (*Standing by bench L. end*)

BETH. Why should I care?

BLAKE. No reason, but I wish you did.

BETH. (*Oblivious*) Have some turkey?

BLAKE. Gimme the neck. (*Sitting*) Thanks.

BETH. (*Hands bread and butter*) Bread and butter?

BLAKE. Thank you. (*Takes a bite; smiles at her. She smiles at him. Slight pause. They repeat business*) Homemade bread! Gee, I'm crazy about homemade bread! Why don't they have Christmas picnics?

BETH. Rather chilly. Taste good?

BLAKE. Did you cook it?

BETH. Oh, you can be honest about it.

BLAKE. Best ever. (*She gives him another small sandwich, which he looks at*) Aren't they wearin' the bread thin in sandwiches this year? (*She laughs. He looks into basket; she does same after him, twice*) Is that pie in there? (*Looking in together and raising head at same time*)

BETH. Yes.

BLAKE. What kind?

BETH. Mince.

BLAKE. Like Mother used to make?

BETH. Yes, have some?

BLAKE. No, I don't carry any life insurance.

BETH. Stupid not to have another glass, but I wasn't expecting company.

BLAKE. (*Getting bottle and glass out of basket, replacing untouched sandwich in basket*) Let's make it a loving cup. (*Cork is on a string, he flicks it with his fingers*) Say, isn't this clubby? (*He pours into glass, imitating soda-fountain clerk. He gives glass to BETH, she drinks, offers it to him; he twists glass around and drinks out of same spot*)

BETH. Have some celery? (*She gives him a very small piece*)

BLAKE. Hope I'm not robbing you? (*He picks the leaves off the stalk*) She loves me, she loves me not. (*Seeing wishbone in basket*) You gave me the wishbone. Will you wish with me? (*Wipes wishbone on napkin*)

BETH. I'm ready.

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BLAKE. I wish I could eat this lunch every day.

BETH. Oh, you mustn't tell your wish.

BLAKE. Now you must not cheat, and you must pull as hard as I do. Now, when I say go—(*They break bone*) I've lost. (*Throws bone in basket*)

BETH. You didn't want to get it, did you? You'd hate to eat turkey every day.

BLAKE. I wouldn't if you gave it to me.

BETH. (*Looking at him*) See here, young man, are you trying to flirt with me? Nice return for charity to a——

BLAKE. (*Takes out card and cigarette case*)  
A drummer.

BETH. Oh, are you a drummer?

BLAKE. Don't I look the part? (*Taking out card*) What did you think I was? A tourist? Permit me. (*Hands card to her*) Do you mind if I smoke? (*Taking out cigarette and match. BETH points to "No smoking" sign; he looks at it*) Oh, I don't believe in signs.

BETH. You travel for Martin Drury. That's Mr. Royce's firm?

BLAKE. Yes, I've come down to sell Royce.

BETH. Oh, you're a friend of Mr. Royce's?

BLAKE. (*Lighting match*) Not exactly. Do you know him? Of course, that goes without saying. (*Puffs cigarette*) I suppose you meet everybody? (*Lighting cigarette and looking front*)

BETH. Because I am doing an unconventional thing now, doesn't mean that I "meet everybody"! (*He looks at her*) When I began to work here I felt that every man who asked me the price of a ticket should first be properly introduced. (*He smiles and leans forward*) But I've gotten over all that. A friend of mine—Mrs. Babbit, a dear sensible soul—called my attention to it; she didn't mince matters, she simply said, "Beth, any time you're better than your job, quit it." I came right down off my high horse. And do you know, I've

made some of my best friends right at that little window? (*Looking wistfully at window*)

BLAKE. (*Looking toward her*) What's a girl like you working for?

BETH. (*Lightly, turning front*) A living.

BLAKE. (*Sitting up straight*) Then the men in this town must be a lot of chumps.

BETH. Marriage, you mean? I've a better object than that in view.

BLAKE. Can a woman have a better object?

BETH. That depends on the object. (BLAKE *moving from her*) Personally, I prefer my independence and my property.

BLAKE. Your property?

BETH. (*Putting hand on chest*) You are lunching with a land proprietor.

BLAKE. (*Rising and bowing to her with a grandiloquent bow*) I appreciate the honor.

BETH. You don't believe me. See, I'm going to be sold up for taxes to-morrow. (*Points to placard*)

BLAKE. Sold up?

BETH. (*Arranging basket, putting in basket, etc.*) Um—um——

BLAKE. (*Going up to read notice of sale and puts out cigarette which he drops on floor*) It doesn't seem to worry you?

BETH. What do you want me to do, pull a long face and cry over it? I'd hoped to have paid the taxes by this time, but I was ill and was docked.

BLAKE. (*Turning to her*) Docked—the railroad company docked you? Cheap pikers! Will you lose your land? Tell me about it; where is it? (*Coming down to c. rear of bench r.*)

BETH. You've passed it on the way.

BLAKE. Oh, did I? I wasn't noticing very much.

BETH. (BLAKE *sits on up-stage bench, leans on back of it*) It isn't anything to look at; it lies

right along side of the railroad just outside of the Junction. It's always been called Elliott's Stone Pile. People around here think it isn't good for much, but my father struggled all his life to keep it for me. It meant days of work and nights of worry for him, and for me, self-denial, the sacrifice of all the little pleasure that other girls have had, all that makes a happy girlhood. It's all I have in the world. Isn't it funny my sitting here telling you my troubles, when I've no doubt you've loads of your own? How's trade? What's your line?

BLAKE. Women.

BETH. What?

BLAKE. Women's suits. (*Jumps up, goes to ticket-window facing front*) Say, I've some peachy samples—(*Coming to L. of bench R.*) some almost Paris styles. Come on over to the hotel and look them over.

BETH. (*Slowly*) I don't understand you, Mr. Blake? I wouldn't think you the kind of man to misjudge a woman. I'm not so unconventional as to visit you.

BLAKE. (*Turning to front*) In wrong again—and I never tried harder in my life to get in right.

BETH. It isn't the return I expected for a hospitable impulse. I don't really know why I did offer to share my lunch with you to day, except that I've had so many lonely Christmas's myself.

BLAKE. (*To BETH*) Do you think I would meaningly be careless of your feelings? That would be a snide return for a hospitality so kind that the recollection of it will be with me every Christmas of my life. May I call on you?

BETH. (*To BLAKE*) You see, I live in a boarding-house and—(*Looking front*) I don't know what Mrs. Tompkins would say if she knew how I met you. (*To BLAKE*) I'd have to tell her and

I'm afraid she wouldn't understand. You see there's such a prejudice against——

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) Against drummers! (*Moving away to c.*) Give a dog a bad name.

BETH. (*Taking basket*) But I don't share that prejudice; I know lots of nice drummers. Why, I think you—(*Crossing to c.*)

BLAKE. (*Turning to her*) Yes? (*She turns front*)

BETH. Oh, nothing. (*Looking down*)

BLAKE. I'd like to know just what you think. (*Telegraph*)

BETH. (*Moving to office*) Oh, there's the key!

BLAKE. (*Stands still*) Say, that's a funny feeling—(*Hand to heart*) is it the turkey? (*Looks at bench R., then turns, sees BETH at window, she smiles*) Then I suppose I won't see you again? (*Going up to window L., facing BETH*)

BETH. Possibly—I'm going over to the Elite tonight to call on my friend Mrs. Babbit.

(*Enter CRABB R. door in flat.*)

BLAKE. But I don't know Mrs. Babbit.

CRABB. Young man, you're in luck.

(*BLAKE laughs loudly. CRABB exits to R. I E.*)

BLAKE. Where is the Elite?

BETH. I'm going that way; I'll show you, if I'm not taking up too much of your time——

BLAKE. Go on, take as much as you like. (*BETH puts on hat, looks at BLAKE. BLAKE going to bench puts on hat, looks at BETH. Puts on coat, singing; BETH puts on coat, closes window*) Blake, you've got it good! (*Crossing, picking up dress-suit case*)

BETH. (*Re-enters*) I'm ready. Heavy?



BLAKE. I feel so good I could carry the stove.

BETH. Here, let me show you. (*Puts his umbrella through handle of suit case*)

BLAKE. Oh, no!

BETH. Just to the corner.

BLAKE. Oh, well, I don't care. I could do this all day. (*Laughs. BETH laughs. ROYCE enters R. door flat, comes down to C. BETH stops. BLAKE turns*) Hello, Royce, Merry Christmas! (*Lifts hat to ROYCE*)

(*BETH and BLAKE exit, laughing, door L. in flat.*)

CURTAIN.

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## ACT II.

SCENE:—BLAKE'S room in the Elite Hotel.

TIME:—Christmas Night.

*It is the typical bedroom of a village hotel. Its walls are covered with a cheap and very ugly striped wall paper. The woodwork—originally white—is now dirty and discolored. BLAKE has had all the furniture, with the exception of a large round table and half a dozen chairs, removed, and is using it as a sample room. At the rear of the stage, against the wall, and on either side of the door C. in back flat, and against the wall at L., are sample tables covered with unbleached muslin on which are placed in neat piles, women's coats and skirts of varied color and design. To them are affixed price tags. A woman's jacket hangs on a chair L., a second is suspended from the telephone receiver, a third from the electric button R. of door C., and a*

*fourth from the electric light bracket on wall R. A skirt is thrown carelessly over the upper end of the table L. On the lower end of this table are two books of samples. On the L. end of table of door C. is another skirt, and on the lid of the opened trunk at R., is a woman's ulster. At R. 1 E. and at R. 3 E. are windows at which are hung cheap lace curtains. On window at R. 1 E. is a rope attachment for use as in the event of fire. A steam radiator stands between the two windows. At L. 3 is a door to BLAKE'S bedroom. The door at C. gives on to the main hall. The backing is covered with a faded red wall paper. In this backing and exactly opposite the door C. to BLAKE'S room is a door to MRS. BABBIT'S room. The backing for this door represents the wall of another bedroom, covered with wall paper. From the ceiling hangs an old fashioned gas chandelier now wired for electricity. On the walls are landscape "chromos" in tawdry gilt frames. On the back of the door is tacked a card printed "Rules of the Hotel". On the floor is a cheap Ingrain carpet.*

AT RISE:—BLAKE *discovered in his shirt-sleeves. He is smoking a cigar, his arms full of clothing, which has evidently been taken out of a trunk in bedroom.*

(Sings: "Nothing half so sweet in life as Love's young dream.")

BLAKE. Sweet name, Beth! (Goes L. whistling. There is a knock at the door) Come in. (Throws skirt on table L. Goes to sample table L.)

(Enter TED WATTS, a drummer, several years younger than BLAKE; he is BLAKE'S best pal.

*He has his hat tilted over his eyes, a cigar stuck in his mouth at an angle of fifty-five degrees; overcoat collar is turned up; his hand deep in his pocket. He is a picture of cold grouchiness.)*

BLAKE. (*Down L.*) Hello, Wattsie, Merry Christmas!

WATTS. Merry Hell! (*He crosses to radiator, stands warming his back. BLAKE crossing a little to C.*)

BLAKE. Why the grouch?

WATTS. Why not the grouch? How'd you like to push on the reins for five miles behind a frost-bitten skate with everything from creeping paralysis to housemaid's knee. Then all the way back holding a couple of those cute little trunks—(*Points to sample trunks*) in your lap. What do you expect me to do—kiss you? (*BLAKE laughs*) Go on—laugh—ha—ha—(*Laughs sarcastically*)

BLAKE. I'm mighty sorry, old man. I got my trains mixed.

WATTS. (*Coming toward L. of table R. C.*) That's a nice little ingenue excuse. They ought to send you out with a guide. Where've you been? (*Coming down*)

BLAKE. (*C.*) I've—I've been—been delayed. I've been looking over the town.

WATTS. Cut that, you've been buzzin' a girl! (*WATTS sits R.*)

BLAKE. (*C.*) No, Watts, not a girl—the girl. (*Turning front*)

WATTS. (*Seated*) The girl? Now don't hand me that.

BLAKE. This one's different.

WATTS. Same old wheeze: they're all different at the beginning, but they're pretty much alike at the finish.

BLAKE. Who's tossed you? (*At chair L. of table*)

WATTS. Now, don't you lay awake nights over any skirt giving me the toss.

BLAKE. I won't—I've got nightmares of my own. (*Crosses to L. then to C.*) Won't you lay off your wraps and stay a while? (C.)

WATTS. And freeze to death. I'm not all warmed up by love's young dream, I'm still driving! (*He shivers and goes back to radiator.* BLAKE crosses with samples to L. *There is a knock at the door*)

BLAKE. Come in.

(*Enter JULIUS, a colored porter. He is carrying a pitcher of ice-water. The ice clinks against the pitcher.*)

JULIUS. Ice water, sir. (*Offering to BLAKE; BLAKE points to WATTS. JULIUS offers water to WATTS. WATTS picks up chair, and starts for JULIUS. JULIUS exits keeping eye on WATTS, closing the door softly*)

(*BLAKE crossing to L.—laughing—throws skirt on table L.*)

BLAKE. I see to that Jasper's house trouble. Had your supper?

WATTS. (*Facing radiator*) Everything was out when I struck the dining-room. Had yours?

BLAKE. Wasn't very hungry. Had the lunch of my life to-day.

WATTS. In Grand Crossing? Who staked you? (*Looking at BLAKE*)

BLAKE. Sh—sh—little boys shouldn't ask questions! I was mighty glad to get your wire saying you'd meet me here.

WATTS. Like you to pick out this God-forsaken hole. (*Moves down L.*)

BLAKE. Oh, it isn't so forsaken. (*Song "Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream"*) Say, Watts, do you believe in love?

WATTS. Love! (*Laughing*) Change your dope.

BLAKE. Love at first sight.

WATTS. (*Imitating BLAKE*) Love at first sight!

BLAKE. You're a natural born echo.

WATTS. You've been reading fairy tales! Love at first sight! (*Laughs*)

BLAKE. Don't encore yourself. (*WATTS laughing, crosses to R. to table*) No, and I'm not batty.

WATTS. That girl's got you going.

BLAKE. Going—I'm gone! (*Looking front*)

WATTS. What, Blake, the prize con?

BLAKE. The kidder from Kiddersville. Go on, say it.

WATTS. This is immense; this is too good to keep! (*Starting across to phone L.*) I've got to put the boys wise to this.

BLAKE. Any of the boys in town? (*As WATTS goes to phone, takes down receiver*)

WATTS. (*At phone*) Yes, Kimball and old Cobb are here doing penance for their crimes. Is this the office? Ask Mr. Kimball and Mr. Cobb to join Mr. Blake and Mr. Watts. (*Louder*) Yes—this room. (*Comes to L. of BLAKE*)

BLAKE. See here, Watts, I'm strong for a joke even when I'm the goat, but this isn't a joke. I'll stand for your kidding but I don't care to be joshed by Kimball and old Cobb. (*Turns front*)

WATTS. Oh, as bad as that, eh?

BLAKE. (*Looking front*) She's the only thought in my head.

WATTS. Oh, well, if that's the way you feel about it.

BLAKE. That's the way I feel about it. (WATTS starts to door) Oh, come on, Watts, now don't get huffy. Stick around, the boys will be here in a minute, and we'll get up a little game.

WATTS. (*Coming down L.*) Not on your existence. I'm not going to sit here an' play freeze out. You've induced a yearning for a little feminine society. Wonder if that little milliner's here? (*He takes out a little red pocket memorandum book*) G. G.—Grand Crossing—Here it is—Minnie Conway—Main Street—Telephone 43. Suppose I call her up an' see if she hasn't a friend?

BLAKE. (*Crosses R.*) Nix with Minnie! (*Moving across to table R.*) I'm not going to cheapen my recollections of Beth Elliott with any of your village Salomes! Watts, for the first time in many moons I'm jerry to myself. (*Leaning against front of table*)

WATTS. How?

BLAKE. (*Leaning back against table*) She didn't want me to call on her. I felt just a little bit ashamed. She thought her landlady might want to sidestep a drummer.

WATTS. (*L. of C.*) I like her nerve and yours, too! Ashamed of being a drummer!

BLAKE. No, ashamed of myself—of the way I've helped to make the name "drummer" stand for dallying by the wayside. It's an awful thing, Wattsie, to think that if a drummer heaves in sight all the old ladies yell, "Run, daughter, the Indians are upon us."

WATTS. (*Breaking in*) Oh, I guess we're no worse than any other men. What in blazes are we going to do? Look at the life we lead—no home—no women-folks! (*Looking down, with cigar in R. hand*)

BLAKE. (*At table*) I know, Wattsie, it's pretty hard keepin' a strangle-hold on home-ties when you only see your home about twice a year.

WATTS. (L. c.) That's right. You don't think I'm stuck on this red book, do you? But—(*Putting it back in pocket*) I wasn't brought up to be lonesome.

BLAKE. I'm strong for company, too, (*Moving R. to chair*) but if I thought I had half a chance with that girl—all the others to the discard! (*Sis R. of table*)

WATTS. (*Crossing, sits L. of table, astride of chair*) Say, she must be a peach.

BLAKE. Peach? She's the whole orchard, but no goo-goo eyes about her. Just a sweet, brave little girl, not holding down a job to get a few glad rags. Isn't on the lookout to make a few flash acquaintances. Just working like you and I to keep the pot boiling. (*Looking front*) She has some land that's to be sold up, and she's working to pay off the taxes. (*Looking at WATTS*) Can't you understand? I respect her.

WATTS. Why don't you put up a talk to her?

BLAKE. (*Back in chair*) I wonder if she'd believe me?

WATTS. That's the devil of having a reputation.

BLAKE. Yes, Wattsie, us and the soubrettes—when we are on the level who believes us?

WATTS. Oh, what's the use! Let's have a drink—

BLAKE. Sure, I'm so dry my hoops are falling off. (*Rise*) Tell them to send up a boy.

(WATTS goes to telephone. BLAKE crosses L., whistling.)

WATTS. (*At phone*) This the office? Send up the boy. (*Going down L.*)

(A knock at the door. Enter KIMBALL, a man of about thirty-five; also COBB, a man about fifty, gray hair. They are very gloomy.)

BLAKE. (*Shaking hands cordially*) Hello, Kimball! (KIMBALL goes to R. above table, throws hat on it) Hello, Cobb, you old sight for sore eyes! How goes it? Merry Xmas.

KIMBALL. (*Irritably*) Merry Xmas; what in blazes is the matter with you? (*Goes down R. of table and sits*)

WATTS. (*Drops down L.*) He's full of glad tidings.

COBB. I don't know the brand, but me for it! I don't care what I'm full of, so I'm full. (*Sitting L. of table*)

(*A knock at the door.*)

BLAKE. Come in. (*Enter JULIUS C., comes C. BLAKE C.*) I don't want the porter, I want the bell-boy.

JULIUS. I'se the bell-boy.

BLAKE. Then send up a waiter.

JULIUS. I'se dat, too.

BLAKE. I guess you're the whole works?

JULIUS. I'se the staff of the Elite.

BLAKE. Drinks for a large party!

JULIUS. Can't serve no drinks, boss.

(KIMBALL, WATTS and COBB look at JULIUS.)

BLAKE. What kind of a stall are you giving me?

JULIUS. 'Tain't no stall, it's a solemn fac': clerk downstairs won't allow it.

BLAKE. You go down and tell that harp in the office that the gentleman in 25 has a chill; make it four chills.

JULIUS. The bar done shut down last night.

COBB. Julius, haven't you a private stock?

JULIUS. No, sir, I never drinks durin' office hours.



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BLAKE. (*Taking a half dollar*) Julius, what could you do for that?

JULIUS. (*Grinning*) Most anything, sir.

WATTS. Think—(*Holding up half dollar*)

(BLAKE takes WATT'S coin.)

KIMBALL. (*Holding up half a dollar*) Think hard!

(COBB takes KIMBALL'S coin L. table.)

COBB. (*Holding up half dollar*) Think quickly. (*Shaking coins, etc.*)

BLAKE. (*Shaking it in his hands*) Listen.

JULIUS. Well, gentlemen, you're all mighty persuasive. (BLAKE gives JULIUS money; COBB does same) I might get you something.

ALL. Ah!

JULIUS. I might get you some tea.

COBB. (*Turns quickly to JULIUS*) Tea!

(WATTS jumping forward to C. BLAKE holds him.  
JULIUS, frightened, runs up-stage.)

JULIUS. (*Coming down*) I think you might all be partial to this brand of tea. Guess you never drunk none a my Scotch breakfast tea. (*They all laugh*)

KIMBALL. Now, you're shouting!

BLAKE. Vamp! (*Making exit door L., gets coat*)

WATTS. And vamp quick.

COBB. Bring me a double portion.

(JULIUS exits. KIMBALL sits R. of table.)

WATTS. (*Gloomily*) Of all the holes to spend Christmas in!

(*Crossing up R. to back of card-table; takes off coat and hat, leaving them on sample tables; going up for chair up R.*)

KIMBALL. Of all the hotels to make you think of a misspent life!

COBB. The suicides' rest!

KIMBALL. It's the rottenest-run place! Why, there's even no mail delivery.

COBB. I can put up with that. (*Enter BLAKE from room L.*) It's no drink delivery that worries me.

WATTS. (*Bringing chair to back of table, and standing by it*) Now, Kimball, cut out that rave about mail; Cobb and I have had it all day.

BLAKE. What's the matter, Kimball? Short of money? I've a few loose rags here I can loan you. (*Getting out money*)

WATTS. No, he's short of sentiment; he hasn't heard from home. Oh, these married men! (*Back of table and sits*)

BLAKE. Sorry, Kimball, couldn't you make it? (*By chair at back of table*)

KIMBALL. No, got snowed in up the road; met up with Cobb and came here.

COBB. Wait until I see that man who recommended this one-eyed town.

KIMBALL. It's the first Christmas I've been away from the little woman.

WATTS. Then what are you kicking about? It's so long since I've been home on Christmas.

BLAKE. (*After a pause*) Oh, well, boys, they're thinking about us! (*Pokes COBB in back. To COBB*) Well, old boots and shoes, how goes it? (*Sits*)

COBB. Oh, not so worse; how are the ladies?

BLAKE. Styles still changing, thank God. (*Sits*)

COBB. (*Loudly*) Say, where's that boy?

JULIUS. (*Off-stage*) Here comes de boy, here

comes de boy! (*Enter with tray and cups, seltzer bottle and whiskey in teapot*)

BLAKE. Julius, get the cigars.

JULIUS. Yes, sir, yes, sir. (*Exits L.*)

KIMBALL. (*To BLAKE*) Going to sell this town?

BLAKE. Hardly. (*Business looking in teapot, etc.; all laugh*) Drury has a man down here. (*Pouring tea*) I've really brought down a bunch of truck for him to look over. Say, you must know our man here: Royce.

KIMBALL. Royce? Franklin Royce? There must he has the meal-ticket privilege here.

WATTS. Let's have him in. I don't like him, but we're a man shy. Call him up, Blake, it's your party. You're friends, aren't you?

BLAKE. Just as chummy as a pair of panthers. (*To JULIUS, who enters L. with box of cigars and ash-tray, putting them on table*) Julius!

JULIUS. Yes, sir?

BLAKE. Does Mr. Royce live here?

JULIUS. (*Coming c.*) He doesn't exactly live here: he has a room over Mrs. Stratton's store, but he has the meal-ticket privilege here.

ALL. Poor Royce!

BLAKE. Well, you run across and tell him Mr. Blake and some friends would like to have him come over here. (*Throws JULIUS a coin*)

JULIUS. (*At door, bites coin, BLAKE catches him. Quick exit*) Yes, sir, yes, sir.

(*The men draw up to table.*)

BLAKE. (*Ladylike manner. With cup in his hand—to WATTS*) Two lumps, Clara.

WATTS. (*Same manner*) No thanks, Maud.

(*BLAKE fills out cup with seltzer.*)

BLAKE. (*Same manner. To COBB*) How will you have yours, dearest?

COBB. (*Same manner*) Strong, damn you!

(BLAKE *fills up a cup for COBB.*)

BLAKE. (*Fills up cup for KIMBALL; WATTS takes it. To WATTS*) Pass this to the chaperone.

WATTS. (*To KIMBALL*) Here, you old hen.  
(*Putting cup beside KIMBALL*)

COBB. Drink it, Kimball; it's good for what ails you.

BLAKE. If you haven't got it, it will give it to you.

WATTS. To us, God help us!

BLAKE. To us, who's like us—damn few!

ALL. To us! (*All drink*)

KIMBALL. To the absent, God Bless 'em!

ALL. (*All drink*) To the absent!

(BLAKE *fills cup.*)

KIMBALL. Mighty funny I didn't hear from home!

COBB. He's off again.

BLAKE. (*Filling up cups again with tea*)

Here's to the man who loves his wife,  
And loves his wife alone.  
For many a man loves another man's wife,  
When he ought to be loving his own.

(*All drink to KIMBALL.*)

KIMBALL. Here, you're getting one in on me.  
(*Taking his cup*)

Here's to good old whiskey,  
So amber and so clear.  
It's not so sweet as a woman's lips.  
But a blamed sight more sincere.

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COBB. You old reprobate!

BLAKE. Trying to square yourself!

WATTS. Oh, that's one of those good husbands' bluffs. Blake, this is for you.

Here's to the man who stops to pause,  
Before he takes a wife.  
In fact I see no earthly cause,  
Why he shouldn't pause for life.

BLAKE. (*Rising*) Coming right back at you.

Here's to the girl I love,  
I wish that she were nigh!  
If drinking this would bring her here,  
I'd drink the whole place dry.

COBB. You're getting mushy!

Here's to all good fellows,  
We go out of this world, we know not where.  
But if we're good fellows here.  
We'll be thoroughbreds there.

(*Starts to sing.*)

We're all such jolly good fellows——

(*They all join in. The song began in a loud jolly key, gradually dying out. They all sit staring in front of them gloomily. A pause.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Off*) Is this the office? Has a respectable woman to be kept awake all night by a pack of drunken rowdies!

(*All laugh.*)

BLAKE. All right, sister, we'll be good.

*(There is a knock heard off-stage center.)*

KIMBALL. This is no place for a minister's son!  
*(Crosses to R.)*

*(COBB places cup on tray; crosses to R. of table.*  
WATTS *crossing to L. by C. door. Knock.*  
BLAKE *goes to door and throws it open. BETH*  
ELLIOTT *is standing knocking at MRS. BABBIT'S*  
*door across the hall. BETH turns.)*

BLAKE. Oh, good-evening, Miss Elliott.

BETH. Good-evening, Mr. Blake. *(They shake hands)*

WATTS. It's the girl at the depot; he's bug-house about her.

BLAKE. I'm afraid we've disturbed your friend, Mrs. Babbit.

*(BETH knocks again. MRS. BABBIT appears.)*

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, it's you, deary.

*(BLAKE points to tray on table.)*

WATTS. *(Pointing)* Cobb, the tray.

*(COBB snatches coat from trunk, covers tray with it.)*

BETH. *(Outside)* Mrs. Babbit, let me present Mr. Blake.

BLAKE. I'm sorry we annoyed you. Won't you come in and let my friends apologize. *(BLAKE and MRS. BABBIT enter. BETH stays in door)* Boys, this is Mrs. Babbit—Mrs. Babbit, Mr. Watts, Mr. Kimball, Mr. Cobb.

*(COBB, who has grabbed the seltzer siphon, hides it*

*behind his back as he makes deep bow, then hides it behind trunk.)*

MRS. BABBIT. (*Coming down a little*) Pleased to meet you.

KIMBALL. Afraid our Christmas carols annoyed you.

MRS. BABBIT. That's all right, gentlemen.

BLAKE. (*To BETH in c. door*) Won't you come in? (*BETH enters*) Miss Elliott, the boys—

BETH. Pleased to meet the boys. (*Sees coat over tray*) Oh, what lovely clothes!

(*WATTS grabs skirt off table back L., holds it up, attracting MRS. BABBIT'S attention. KIMBALL picks up coat on back of chair L. Brushes it. COBB rushes up back of table, grabs skirt, comes down L. of table, intercepts BETH and displays skirt to her.*)

BLAKE. Guess it's a pretty good line.

BETH. (*Turning to BLAKE*) Don't you know?

COBB. You don't have to know anything about goods to sell 'em.

(*BLAKE bows to COBB.*)

BLAKE. Mrs. Babbit, it was very rude of me to call you sister, but now that I've seen you, I wish I had that privilege.

MRS. BABBIT. Ain't you awful? (*Makes playful slap at BLAKE. BLAKE imitates her*)

WATTS. (*To KIMBALL*) He could talk a duck off the water.

BETH. Oh, isn't this a dear? (*Starts for coat on table again*)

BLAKE. (*Getting blue skirt from sample table back, coming down c.*) Now, I like blue.

(WATTS showing skirt on himself.)

MRS. BABBIT. (To BLAKE) Are you wearing hobble skirts in New York?

BLAKE. Yes, and we look great in 'em.

MRS. BABBIT. You're a terrible cut-up.

BLAKE. Now, sister—(*Throwing blue skirt up back on sample table*)

MRS. BABBIT. I'm having a three-piece suit made. I always design my own clothes. (*Going down-stage c.* KIMBALL laughs loudly. MRS. BABBIT gives him a look and he stops)

BLAKE. Is that one of your creations?

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, it's just a little thing I run up. (*Walks up and down stage displaying gown*)

WATTS. You're certainly a grand little designer.

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, Mr. Watts!

BETH. It isn't really anything to what she can do.

MRS. BABBIT. Now, Beth.

BLAKE. I'd like to see her when she gets going.

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, Mr. Blake!

JULIUS. (*Enters*) Here is your tea, gentlemen.

(MRS. BABBIT and BETH turn to look at JULIUS. COBB snatches a coat off sample table attracts BETH's attention. WATTS grasps MRS. BABBIT's arm rushes her down to L., grabs coat from KIMBALL, then using KIMBALL as model; KIMBALL puts right arm through coat, MRS. BABBIT admires it.)

BLAKE. Tea—who ordered tea? Take it away! (*Throwing JULIUS out. Whispers*) Bring it back later.

JULIUS. Yes, sir,—yes, sir. (*Exits*)

MRS. BABBIT. Mr. Blake, you haven't anything in a middle-aged Fluffy Russes.



(BLAKE *nearly falls backward.*)

BLAKE. Why, yes, in the other room. Watts, show Mrs. Babbit my line of Fluffy Ruffles. There are several that would just suit your ready-to-wear figure.

(WATTS, *furious, throws skirt on table* L. KIMBALL *amused.*)

MRS. BABBIT. I'd certainly like to inspect them, Mr. Blake, but I don't know that it would be hardly proper.

WATTS. Oh, quit your kidding, sister. (MRS. BABBIT *exits door R.*)

BLAKE. Kimball, go in and chaperone Mrs. Babbit. (KIMBALL, *furious, throws coat on table* L. COBB *laughs loudly*) Cobb, you chaperone them, too.

(WATTS *laughs.* COBB and KIMBALL *exit door L., glaring at BLAKE.*)

WATTS. Say, what are you giving me?

(BLAKE *pushes* WATTS *off.* All *exit.*)

BLAKE. (*Coming c.*) You're on, eh?

BETH. I'm not blind.

BLAKE. I've simply got to have a half a minute alone with you.

BETH. Then time's up.

BLAKE. I was afraid you weren't coming.

BETH. Were you really?

BLAKE. No, I knew you would.

BETH. (*Coming down a little*) Oh, did you?

BLAKE. I'm clean foolish about you.

BETH. (*She moves coat from over tray, crossing*

to R. front of table) Oh, isn't this a love! (*Crossing to table*) I adore red. (*Turning round right*)

BLAKE. So do I.

BETH. But you said you liked blue? (*Picking up coat sees cups*)

BLAKE. Well, it makes a difference who's wearing blue! (*BETH picks up the cup and looks over the brim at him, laughing*) We were having a cup of tea.

BETH. (*Smelling cup*) Tea?

BLAKE. Oh, well, the boys were blue and I wanted to cheer them up with a dash of red. Away from home, you know.

BETH. (*Putting down cup*) I don't blame them. (*Turning front*)

BLAKE. Do you know you're an awful understanding kind of a girl. (*Going over towards her*) I guess I never woke up until to-day to what it means to have a home and somebody you liked pretty well—passing things across the table to you. It must be great as a steady diet!

BETH. Do you mind if I try on this coat?

BLAKE. Do I mind? Try on the bunch; can I help you? (*He hands her the coat*)

BETH. Thanks. It is lovely, isn't it? (*Picking up sample coat, holding it between them*)

BLAKE. It isn't a marker to what it will be on! Allow me! (*Helping her on with coat*)

BETH. Thanks. Oh, I do love pretty things. (*Looking at BLAKE*)

BLAKE. So do I.

BETH. Do you? (*Looks down—she turns away R.*)

BLAKE. Crazy about them. It's mighty becoming to you.

BETH. Do you think so? (*Turns*) Why, if it weren't for those old taxes, I might buy it. Get thee behind me, Satan! (*Moving towards BLAKE, taking off coat; BLAKE helps her*)

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BLAKE. (*Laying coat on table, back to audience*) You're mighty plucky to resist all the temptations of pretty clothes and make a fight for your land. How much do you owe on it?

BETH. You're the second man who's asked me that to-day. Mr. Royce——

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) Royce, what has he got to do with it?

BETH. Oh, nothing.

BLAKE. You aren't going to let *him* help you?

BETH. I don't need anyone's help.

BLAKE. Aren't you afraid someone might buy it in to-morrow?

BETH. I won't lose my beauty-sleep over that.

BLAKE. I've been thinking an awful lot about you, have you?

BETH. Thinking about myself. I'm not a bit conceited. (*Moving away, right*)

BLAKE. I meant about me.

BETH. About you?

BLAKE. Well, what have you been doing since I saw you last?

BETH. (*Over near table R.*) As that was only a few hours ago——

BLAKE. Is it? It seems longer. That was a great walk we had to-day. What are you going to do to-morrow?

BETH. Work.

BLAKE. I don't suppose we could have another cozy little chat. I'm not very gabby as a rule—(*She gives him a look as if contradicting him*)—but I like to talk to you. Did you ever feel you had known somebody, you had just met, for years and years and years?

BETH. Yes, once——

BLAKE. (*Anxiously turning to her*) Who—Royce?

BETH. No: Mrs. Babbit. (*BLAKE leans against table in relief*) I liked her the minute I saw her.

BLAKE. (*Walks up to L. c.*) It never happened to me before. (*Turning front*) Say, do you believe in love at first sight?

BETH. Yes, my mother fell in love with father that way. (*Comes to table*)

BLAKE. (*Going quickly to table, only part way*) I'd have liked your mother.

BETH. They were married in a week's time.

BLAKE. I'd have liked your father, too. (*Land-ing by her at table*) He's just my kind of man. I always knew it would strike me this way. How do you feel about it?

BETH. About what?

BLAKE. What we were talking about?

BETH. Oh, the coat. (*Picking it up*)

BLAKE. The coat? No. (*Taking coat from her L. of table—throwing it on chair*) I mean love.

BETH. Were we talking about love?

BLAKE. I've been doing my level best.

BETH. Why, are you in love?

BLAKE. Aren't you?

BETH. With whom?

BLAKE. His name begins with B.

BETH. Why, Mr. Blake! (*Turning away to R.*)

BLAKE. (*Coming to her*) You've guessed it. Make it Bob, won't you?

BETH. I think I should be going home——

BLAKE. Oh, what's your hurry?

BETH. Won't you give me my coat, please?

(BLAKE takes coat from table. Assists her to put it on.)

BLAKE. Why, you aren't mad, are you?

(BETH looks down shyly. A knock at the door.  
ROYCE enters on knock.)

ROYCE. Oh, I'm afraid I'm in the way?

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BLAKE. (*Turning sharply on him*) You—

(BETH stops BLAKE. *Pause.*)

BETH. Mrs. Babbit—Mrs. Babbit—(*Coming to c.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Off*) Yes, dearie?

BETH. (*Going up R. to sample table*) I think we had better go.

(*Enter MRS. BABBIT, followed by WATTS, COBB and KIMBALL. BLAKE takes coat from chair L. of table.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, they've the grandest clothes—(*Crossing to R., snubbing ROYCE*)

WATTS. Hello, Royce—you've met Kimball? You know Cobb—(*Going down L. KIMBALL and COBB shake hands with ROYCE*) Glad we got you: we needed another hand for—

BLAKE. (*Interrupting R. of table; snapping fingers*) Old maid!

ROYCE. I'm afraid I can't join you.

WATTS. Sure you can, eh, Blake?

(BLAKE turns as though to say "No". BETH looks at him.)

BLAKE. I hope Royce will give us the pleasure of his company. (*Crossing to R. putting coat on trunk*)

BETH. (*To BLAKE*) Good-night. (*Going to door c.—to others*) Good-night, gentlemen.

COBB. No: "boys" to us—

BETH. Well, good-night, boys—(*Exits c. door and into MRS. BABBIT'S room—snubbing ROYCE*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Starting to go c. door*) Good-night, boys.

ALL. Good-night, sister.

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MRS. BABBIT (*Stops*) Oh, I've something you might use in that game of Old Maid.

BLAKE. Yes?

MRS. BABBIT. Mr. Babbit left me a real nice lot of poker chips. (*Exits c. door—all laugh*)

(ROYCE is taking off overcoat.)

BLAKE. Kimball, will you get the cards? You'll find chips on the dresser.

(*Exit KIMBALL door L.*)

COBB. Let's get comfortable. (*Takes off coat and cuffs, putting them on sample table L.*)

WATTS. Comfortable, got any ear muffs? (*Wiping off table*) Where will I put this booze?

BLAKE. Put it handy. (*Brings table down—WATTS puts tray on small table, back*)

COBB. (*Going to phone*) Anything left, Watts?

WATTS. If I squeeze it a little. (*Looking in teapot*) Have a drink, Royce?

ROYCE. I've had a few, but still I don't mind another one. (*Staggers. Coming down and round R of table, he sits*)

(BLAKE and WATTS watch him.)

WATTS. (*To BLAKE*) Quite a bun—

BLAKE. Bun, he's carrying the whole bakery! (*Lighting cigar. During COBB's phone, WATTS pours out drink for ROYCE*)

COBB. Is this the office? Oh, that you, Julius? Tea for five. (*Crossing to card-table*)

WATTS. If you don't mind my cup. (*Crossing round to R. of card-table, putting cup at ROYCE's place*)

BLAKE. What's it going to be, all Jacks?

(KIMBALL *enters, bringing chips and cards; gets chair and carries it to table.*)

COBB. No, make it straight poker, ten cent ante.  
(*Lights cigar*)

WATTS. Fifty cent limit.

ROYCE. Suits me.

KIMBALL. (*Sits*) I'm on. Who's banker?  
(*Gives BLAKE chips*)

BLAKE. (*Begins to take out chips*) I'll bank.

ROYCE. Got any new stories, Watts?

WATTS. (*Taking cards out of case*) Heard the one about the chorus girl and the million dollar legacy?

ROYCE. New to me.

BLAKE. Nix, they might hear you across the hall. (*Gives chips to KIMBALL*)

WATTS. (*Looks at transom, etc.*) All right.  
(*Lowering his voice*) Some chorus girls talking in a dressing room——

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) Cut it out, I haven't got a laugh left in me for one of your funny stories.  
(*Gives chips to COBB*)

WATTS. Oh, very well! Cobb, will you lead us in prayer.

(BLAKE *gives chips to ROYCE—all laugh.*)

ROYCE. This is like old times. Haven't played in so long. (*Chip to WATTS*)

COBB. Kind of hanker for the road, eh? (*Counting chips*)

ROYCE. (*Counting chips*) Occasionally.

WATTS. (*Counting chips*) Oh, it's a glad bad career!

BLAKE. This leading the sample life. (*Puts chip box on floor. Others groan at the pun*)

(KIMBALL *counts chips.*)

COBB. (*Sitting back in chair*) Still working for that old pirate Drury?

BLAKE. (*Making record of chips on envelope*) See here, Cobb, Drury hardly runs in the pirate class; he makes money but he does a lot of good.

COBB. Yes, he does a lot and does 'em good.

BLAKE. He's always been on the level with me.

COBB. It's to his interest, then. Martin and I sold goods together and, well—I wouldn't bank on him—it's money first, last and always with Martin.

ROYCE. Mr Drury will be here to-morrow. Why don't you stay over and *reminisce* together? (*Makes bad pronunciation*)

COBB. No, Martin and I have gone different ways, and some of the recollections might be painful.

BLAKE. (*Throwing cards around face up. Three queens should come up in the deal*) First Jack deals.

WATTS. (*After first five cards are dealt*) Who pinched the Jacks?

BLAKE. Don't seem to be anything in this deck but typewriters! (*Deals to ROYCE. Jack appears*) Your cards, Royce; let's open with a Jack anyway.

ALL. All right. (*All ante one white chip, except KIMBALL*)

COBB. Everybody up.

WATTS. Oh, put up, Kimball, put up.

BLAKE. Come on, Kimball, decorate the mahogany.

KIMBALL. Excuse me. (*Puts in one white chip*)

COBB. Yes, siree. Martin's a wise old owl—used to play a bully game. (*ROYCE puts cards over for COBB to cut them*) Royce, did you start with Drury? (*Cutting cards*)

ROYCE. Yes, Blake and I started with him about the same time. (*Starts to deal*)

BLAKE. Oh, he's Martin's white-haired boy.

WATTS. Why didn't you cuddle up to him?



BLAKE. When it comes to cuddlin' up to the boss I'm a few chips shy.

ROYCE. Drury thinks a great deal of Blake.

BLAKE. That's real sweet of Drury.

ROYCE. Blake wasn't handed as good a territory as me.

BLAKE. And my business methods didn't make as much of a hit with the firm as yours. (*Puts cigar on tray. ROYCE finishes deal*)

ROYCE. The firm think very well of you, Blake. (*Turns, facing audience*)

WATTS. Why don't you have that little testimonial framed?

BLAKE. (*Looking at cards*) Good idea. "To whom it may concern: The bearer, Robert Blake, has always been sober, industrious, neat in appearance, and (*Looking over cards at ROYCE*) kept his hands clean."

(*All have cards up. Looking at them they exchange glances. ROYCE, noticing it, looks at BLAKE. BLAKE is oblivious.*)

WATTS. (*I red*) Me for it.

BLAKE. (*I red*) I'll trail.

COBB. (*Noticing KIMBALL who does not come in*) Well——

BLAKE. (*Softly*) Sh—don't wake him—(*Yells in his ear*) Oh, Kimball!

KIMBALL. (*I red*) I'll come in.

COBB. (*I red*) I'm there.

ROYCE. (*I red*) I'm with you. How many? (*Dealing again*)

WATTS. Three.

BLAKE. To my house a dark man with a bundle—(*All laugh*) An ace, please.

KIMBALL. Two.

COBB. (*In reminiscient vein*) The last game I sat in was in Tacoma——

BLAKE. (*interrupting*) But we're in Grand Crossing. Git ap.

COBB. (*Angrily*) Three.

ROYCE. Three to the dealer!

WATTS. (*1 red*) This looks good to muh.

BLAKE. I don't mind contributing a little bird seed. (*1 red. Pause—all notice KIMBALL*) Oh, Kimball, do you want to play poker, or sleep? Make up your mind.

KIMBALL. That's what I'm doing.

WATTS. Don't annoy him, Blake, he's got such a lot of mind to make up. (*Laugh from others*)

KIMBALL. (*2 reds*) Just for that, buck this.

COBB. Since you urge me, gentlemen. (*3 reds*)

ROYCE. I'm out. (*Throws down hand*)

WATTS. Oh, crullers! (*Throws down hand*)

BLAKE. Oh, this is as easy as stealing a dog license from a pup! Once again, please. (*2 blue chips. Pause—all impatient. To KIMBALL*) Oh, come on, Philadelphia.

KIMBALL. I'll raise. Got any more of that bird seed? (*3 blues*)

COBB. Oh, if you want a sprint for your money, I'll go you all one better. (*4 blues*)

BLAKE. You've got my tag. (*Throws down cards*)

KIMBALL. I've got the habit. I'll tilt you once more. (*2 blues*)

COBB. Let's see your picture-book. What've you got? (*1 blue*)

KIMBALL. Kings up.

COBB. Kings up here. What's next.

KIMBALL. Sevens.

COBB. Fours. (*Throws cards on table—all laugh etc.*)

BLAKE. Suckers.

WATTS. My card. Let's make 'em all Jacks. (*Shuffling*)

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ALL. All right. (*All chip 1 white except KIMBALL*)

ROYCE. Kimball, going to sell this town?

(BLAKE picks up cigar.)

KIMBALL. Don't believe they'd be interested in rubber goods.

WATTS. (*Shuffling cards*) I think some of those London checks might just hit Grand Crossing's natty dressers.

BLAKE. Grand Crossing's getting natty, eh?

WATTS. Natty! You should have seen the line of fancy hosiery and neckwear I planted.

COBB. Lots of loose change, eh?

WATTS. Worse than that. Steinberg laid in a line of pyjamas. (*Places cards for ROYCE*)

COBB. (*ROYCE cuts cards*) Rubes in pyjamas! (*All laugh*)

KIMBALL. You ought to be selling gold bricks.

BLAKE. Where do they get it?

(WATTS begins to deal.)

COBB. Grand Crossing. Isn't there a boom on down here? I heard the railway was going to put in a spur or something.

WATTS. These yaps don't know that.

ROYCE. (*Turning towards COBB*) Where'd you hear that, Cobb?

COBB. One of the road surveyors was telling me the other day. Looks good for you, Royce.

(WATTS finishes deal)

ROYCE. (*Anxiously*) What do you mean, Cobb?

COBB. Ought to help trade.

ROYCE. (*Smiles*) Oh—(*Sitting back in chair*)

BLAKE. Kimball, hand me a match.

KIMBALL. Move, and change my luck.

COBB. (*Throws down cards*) No wonder I'm up against it: I got my left shoe laced. (*Unties lace*)

WATTS. Well, my luck can't be worse, still—(*Getting up and walking around chair*) every little bit helps. (*He looks at cards*) Oh, Lord! (*He gets up and runs rapidly around the chair several times in the other direction*)

BLAKE. Sit down—sit down—you make me dizzy! (*I blue*) I'll bust this for fifty cents. (*Rises to turn for drinks on table*)

COBB. Who's shy?

BLAKE. (*Takes one white chip from KIMBALL'S pile*) Kimball, would you like to leave a call?

(*All laugh.*)

COBB. Lucky you aren't playing in Tacoma!

(*All chip 1 blue as they draw.*)

KIMBALL. (*I blue*) Two.

COBB. (*I blue*) Three.

ROYCE. (*I blue*) Same here.

BLAKE. How many did the dealer take?

WATTS. (*I blue*) Three.

BLAKE. It's as good as it was before. I'll bet fifty cents. (*I blue*)

KIMBALL. (*Quickly*) I'll stick and then some. (*2 blues*)

BLAKE. Bully for Kimball! That was nice and quick.

COBB. (*Reminiscing again*) Now, that's funny—I sat in a game—

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) We know, in Tacoma.

COBB. (*Angrily. 2 blues*) Oh, well, I'm there.

ROYCE. Well, I guess it's worth another dollar. (*3 blues*)

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(WATTS comes in. JULIUS enters with tray and five cups—one to break.)

COBB. (To JULIUS) Well, it's about time.

BLAKE. Julius, speed that booze around. Boys, I'll just raise that five hundred dollars. (*Winks at boys, etc.—all amused*) How are you, Julius?

(JULIUS astounded, puts cup down. BLAKE 1 white.)

KIMBALL. Cobb, if you want any of this it will cost you two of those five-hundred dollars boys. (2 whites) Good-evening, Julius.

(JULIUS puts down cup—more amazed; goes round to R. of card-table with cup for ROYCE.)

COBB. Oh, don't be a piker. Why don't you bet something? We'll make it an even two thousand. How de do, Julius? (4 whites—JULIUS confused starts out window, then goes up back of table to R.)

(ROYCE and WATTS lay down cards.)

BLAKE. (1 blue) I hate this playing with children. This chip means five thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

(JULIUS starts to give cup to COBB. It falls from his hand, breaks; picks it up and places it on tray, then comes C.)

KIMBALL. Now you're beginning to play. That and another thousand. (2 blues)

COBB. How much is there? What a stingy little pot! Not worth taking.

(JULIUS staggers, almost falls, and starts to door.)

BLAKE. Julius, come here, if you had this hand what would you do?

(JULIUS looks at BLAKE's hand and then KIMBALL'S.)

JULIUS. I certainly would hesitate. (*Exits. At door he points to KIMBALL'S hand. KIMBALL catches him; quick exit*)

(*All laugh.*)

BLAKE. Kimball, what you got?

KIMBALL. All blue.

BLAKE. You win. Losers push. (*Pushing chips to KIMBALL*)

BETH. (*Off-stage*) Good-night, Mrs. Babbit.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Off-stage*) Good-night, dearie.

BLAKE. (*Notes the "good-night" smiles*) My cards. (*Sighs loudly*)

COBB. Royce, what are you hanging around here for? (*Puts in white chip*)

ROYCE. (*Putting in white chip*) I'm in on a pretty good thing.

COBB. So?

(*All put white chips in.*)

ROYCE. I've got some inside information.

WATTS. Look out: I had some inside information about some stock that was going to make me a Captain of Industry, and I am still selling neckties. (*WATTS cuts cards. BLAKE begins to deal*)

ROYCE. Well, any time Franklyn Royce is played for a sucker! Cobb just confirmed my tip; I'm going to milk that railroad dry. (*BLAKE gives him 2nd card twice around in deal*)

BLAKE. What do you mean?

ROYCE. There is a piece of property here to be

sold for taxes—(BLAKE *pauses in deal in front of COBB, holding cards till finish of speech*) and Willie is going to be on the job. The fact is I can't play much longer. I'm leaving to-night. Early bird, you know.

BLAKE. (*Significantly*) Something you're going to buy right away?

ROYCE. To-morrow morning. I've ordered my sleigh to meet me here later.

COBB. Well, you are a hustler!

(BLAKE *accidentally turns card face-up to ROYCE.*)

ROYCE. I won't take that card.

BLAKE. You'll have to take it.

ROYCE. I won't take it, it's no good, it's faced.

BLAKE. You can't refuse it; you've got to stick to the rules.

ROYCE. I won't.

BLAKE. Oh, well, we won't quarrel about it. I'll give you another card.

COBB. He can't have another card; he can look at his hand and if he wants to stay out he can, but he's got to play the cards he's got.

ROYCE. (*Leaning across table towards COBB*) I won't do either; you can't make me play this hand—it's a misdeal.

WATTS. Pick up your cards.

ROYCE. I won't!

COBB. You ass, why don't you look at the cards? That may be the very one you want. I'll look at them for you. (*Rises, putting cards to c. of table*) And stay out this hand.

ROYCE. You leave my cards alone, do you hear? (*Strikes at COBB's arm*)

BLAKE. (*Rises*) Here, it's a misdeal.

COBB. No, siree, Bob. The rule's as old as the game.

BLAKE. That will do, Cobb. (COBB *sits*) Your

cards, Kimball. (*Giving KIMBALL cards. Turning to get teapot*) Royce, have another drink.

COBB. I think he's had enough.

WATTS. He's just had enough to make him peevish.

(*BLAKE fills ROYCE'S cup, leaving tea-pot on big table, standing at his place. KIMBALL begins to shuffle.*)

BLAKE. Royce, expect to make a good thing out of that land?

ROYCE. Surest thing you know.

BLAKE. Good farming property?

ROYCE. No, regular stone pile; the railroad's got to have it; lays right alongside of the Junction.

BLAKE. Got to pay high for it?

ROYCE. Watch little Willie.

BLAKE. But suppose someone bids it in?

ROYCE. Ain't going to be anybody there to bid it in: nobody wants it.

COBB. How did you get on to it?

ROYCE. Regular Sherlock Holmes: tipped off railroad wanted it, see? Found out owner. That's where Franklyn old boy comes in.

(*ROYCE looks to his cup.*)

BLAKE. (*Taking tea-pot up from table*) Have another drink, Royce.

COBB. No, what are you trying to do?

(*BLAKE shakes head at COBB.*)

ROYCE. Say, what are you buttin' in for? I guess I know when I have had enough.

BLAKE. Cobb, this is my party, I know what I am doing.



ROYCE. Sure, fill her up again, Blake. (*Holding up cup, laughing*) Here is to little Franklyn!

COBB. (*After ROYCE has finished drink*) Come on, let's play the game!

(*KIMBALL begins to deal.*)

ROYCE. Play the game? You bet I played the game. Owner's a little country girl.

(*BLAKE sets tea-pot down forcibly, turning to watch ROYCE. KIMBALL stops dealing.*)

COBB. So there's a girl in the case?

ROYCE. Surest thing you know. Yaps around here wouldn't take advantage of a good thing—little Franklyn's long suit, taking advantage of any good thing. Nice little girl. (*BLAKE takes cigar*) Very fond of her, goin' to make it all right for her.

COBB. I should think she'd be sore to be done out of her land.

(*BLAKE lays down cigar.*)

ROYCE. Oh, that's all right—sell her land to the railroad—pot of money—come back and say you want a little of this coin—marry little Franklyn and then we live happy forevermore—(*Head sinks on chest*)

BLAKE. But suppose the little village maiden doesn't see it that way and tells you you're a thief?

ROYCE. Tells me I'm a thief. Blake, you're foolish—pour a lot of money in her lap—she isn't goin' to call me a thief. Blake, as a man of the world to a man of the world, you know that every woman's got her price. (*Sleigh bells heard off. BLAKE starts to hit him—then pours him another drink. COBB touches BLAKE'S arm—ROYCE takes cup, drinks. All watch BLAKE*) Thank you, Blake,

hooray for little Franklyn. (*Drinks*) Come on with your game. (*He shoves the cup across the table, his head drops forward on his arm. Sleigh bells sound off R. BLAKE rushes quickly to the window R., then comes down to ROYCE—shakes him—ROYCE does not move. The rest of this scene played very quickly*)

BLAKE. Out—down and out—Watts, after I'm gone. (*Going for coat and hat on sample table by door c.*)

WATTS. After you're gone? (*Rising*)

COBB. (*Turning up to BLAKE—KIMBALL rises*) Where are you going?

BLAKE. I'm going to the Junction in his sleigh.

KIMBALL. What?

BLAKE. Boys, aren't you on? It's her land he's going to steal.

KIMBALL. Whose?

BLAKE. Beth Elliott's. She's a dear plucky little girl, and I—I like her. (*Coming down c.*) I'm going to block his game, that's why I got him drunk. I'm going to beat it to that sale while he's sleeping this off. I'm going to save her land.

COBB. How?

BLAKE. I'm going to pay her taxes. She hasn't the money; it's up to me.

COBB. (*Pointing to ROYCE*) What'll we do with him?

BLAKE. That's up to you. Put a rose in your hair and go as far as you like. (*Exit quickly c. door*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

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SCENE:—*The office of FRANKLYN ROYCE.*

TIME:—*Two o'clock of the following day.*

*It is a square room, with yellow plaster walls and brown woodwork. At R. 1 E. is a window with green shade, which is drawn down at the rise of the curtain. Above this window is a letter press. Above R. 2 E. is a fireplace. On the mantel stand letter and bill files. In the flat L. of C. is a door leading to the hall—with a backing representing plastered wall. Over the door is a transom which is practical; at L. 1 E. is a door. Against L. wall above this door is a bookcase. At L. of door in back flat is a hat-rack and L. of hatrack a small table. At L. of C. is a table with chairs R. and L. of it. At R. of C. a roll-top desk; on top of desk stand the letter files. In front of desk is a swivel arm-chair. At rear of stage and R. of C. is a leather couch. On the floor of stage is a large rug.*

*Before the rise of the curtain can be heard a vigorous pounding on the door and rattling of the knob.*

*As curtain rises, JULIUS' voice off: "Mr. Royce—Mr. Royce."*

(AT RISE. *Discovered: ROYCE asleep on the couch. The room is in semi-darkness, the blinds at the window are drawn; the daylight shows through the transom. ROYCE is in his shirt sleeves. His coat is thrown over him. His hair is dishevelled, his collar unfastened. There is a slight pause—JULIUS' head appears back of the transom.*

*He lifts up the transom, pokes his head through and discovers ROYCE.)*

JULIUS. Mr. Royce, Mr. Royce.

ROYCE. Who is it?

JULIUS. Julius.

ROYCE. Go away and leave me alone!

JULIUS. Lawd, man, you'd better rouse yourself up.

ROYCE. What in blazes do you mean, waking me up in the middle of the night?

JULIUS. Midle of de night? It am de middle of de day.

ROYCE. What!

JULIUS. Now you see—you see—yes, sir, de clock done struck two o'clock.

ROYCE. (*Jumps up, rises, goes down R.*) Two o'clock! Holy smoke, I've missed that sale—and Drury due here on the 2:15. What will I tell him?

JULIUS. Would you mind openin' the door?

ROYCE. Open it yourself.

JULIUS. Say, man, you think I'd climb up in this perilous position for fun. De door am locked.

ROYCE. Locked? (*Turns, looks up-stage*) Where is the key?

JULIUS. Mr. Watts done throw it over the transom last night.

ROYCE. What'd you lock me in for? (*Going up c. to door—finding key on floor*)

JULIUS. Don't go pickin' on me. Mr. Watts done it. (*Disappears*)

ROYCE. I like his nerve? (*Unlocks door and throws it open—crosses to table L. holding his head*)

*(Effect of ladder falling to the floor.)*

JULIUS. (*Enters—standing in door*) Lawd man, be careful! You done broke my leg in three pieces. (*JULIUS enters carrying pitcher*) He cer-

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tainly do look bad. (*Offering pitcher*) Thought this might come in handy. (*ROYCE reaches for it*)

JULIUS. (*Turns R.*) Wait a minute, I'll get you a glass.

ROYCE. (*Crossing to JULIUS*) Never mind, this thirst isn't fussy. (*Grabs pitcher and drains it*)

JULIUS. (*Standing to R. of ROYCE*) I can hear that sizzlin' all de way down.

ROYCE. (*Handing JULIUS the pitcher—who puts it upon table up L.—crosses to table up L.*) Why didn't you call me? What do I pay you for?

JULIUS. (*Coming c. from table*) Mr. Watts done left positive instructions you wasn't to be roused before eleven o'clock.

ROYCE. (*Sitting R. of table L.*) That's queer! Why didn't you rouse me at eleven?

JULIUS. I done pound on de door at eleven o'clock, and then I done pound on de door at twelve—then I done pound on de door at one.

ROYCE. (*Interrupting*) Where was the cashier? (*Tying necktie*) She knew that I was supposed to be at the Junction this morning, and she knew that Drury was coming. Why didn't she call me? I'll see about this. (*Starts to rise*)

JULIUS. Say, man, hold your horses; she done pound with me—regular duet—and you scare her away. You gave most p'inted instructions where we was all to go to—and most terrifying illusions as to what would happen if we didn't go there, and after all, you is de boss. (*Crosses to desk, leaning on corner of it*)

ROYCE. You might have put me to bed properly while you were about it. (*Looking at couch*)

JULIUS. Lawd man, you desisted our efforts. That spot was your personal selection. (*Pointing to couch*)

ROYCE. Was I very much under the weather last night?

JULIUS. You was utterly submerged. Mr. Watts

and I done had our troubles pilotin' you here from the Elite.

ROYCE. Were the others all right?

JULIUS. They were slightly hilarious, but perfectly navigable. Of course, you held your own. But no ordinary drinker can hope to cope with drummers.

ROYCE. (*Slapping table*) Oh, shut up! (*JULIUS falls off desk*) Pull up that blind.

JULIUS. (*Going over to shade of window*) Yes, sah. (*Lets it go up with a slam*)

ROYCE. (*Holding head*) I didn't tell you to break it.

JULIUS. It ain't my fault; it's one of them quick action blinds.

ROYCE. (*Coming c.*) See if you can't get a quick move on and get this office fixed up. Drury will be here in a minute. (*Going back L.*)

JULIUS. Drury? Mr. Martin Drury? The Millionaire Drury of Indiamanopolis?

ROYCE. Don't stand gassing there. Get me a bracer.

JULIUS. (*Starting to c.*) Yes, sah. How'd you like a single portion o' the hair that Scotch dog what bit you last night?

ROYCE. Go out and get me a Bromo Seltzer.

JULIUS. Yes, sah. Oh, Lawdy, I mos' forgot—with Mr. Blake's compliments. (*Puts Bromo Seltzer on the table L.*)

ROYCE. What is it?

JULIUS. (*Coming little c. to R.*) Bromo Seltzer.

ROYCE. Tell Mr. Blake I'm much obliged. (*About to go out L.*)

JULIUS. Mr. Blake done left town.

ROYCE. (*Stopping*) What?

JULIUS. He done left town last night. Went over to the Junction in your sleigh.

ROYCE. To the Junction in my sleigh? Did he leave any word?

JULIUS. (*Moving right*) Left his trunks.

ROYCE. Did he give you any message for me?

JULIUS. (*Jumps*) No, sah. Oh, most forgot: Mr. Watts done give me de bottle. Mr. Watts said you take that to Mr. Royce with Mr. Blake's compliments. Mr. Watts certainly seemed powerful amused about somethin'. (*Laughs*)

ROYCE. Shut up! (*Hits table*) I don't see the joke. Fix me a dose. (*Starting to door L.*)

JULIUS. (*Going to end of desk*) Yes, sah. Don't you think you'd better brush up your hair a little bit before the millionaire arrives from Indianapolis?

ROYCE. Yes, I don't want Drury to see me like this. I suppose he'll raise merry hell as it is; but I can go over to-morrow.

JULIUS. Will you have a single or a double portion? (*Stepping out a little*)

ROYCE. Double, and be quick about it. (*Exits door L.*)

JULIUS. Double and be quick about it—(*Repeating. Taking up bottle with him*) I certainly feel sorry for that poor man. (*Going to the small table up L. Mixes Bromo Seltzer—puts in all the contents of the bottle*) I know just how he feels—cause I've been there myself many's the time. Oh, yes, indeedy.

(*A knock at the door. JULIUS opens it and discloses BETH ELLIOTT standing outside with a telegram in her hand.*)

BETH. I have a telegram for Mr. Royce.

(*JULIUS takes telegram and looks it over.*)

BETH. I said, for Mr. Royce.

JULIUS. I heard you, Miss Elliott, I heard you the first time; but you hadn't better bother him with

nothing trifling now. You just leave it, honey—and I'll give it to him when he's more ca'm-like. I'm soothin' him now. (*Referring to Bromo Seltzer*)

BETH. I can't leave it, Julius. It's a collect message. (*BETH starts toward desk R. ROYCE's voice stops her—JULIUS gives back telegram. In doing so he screens her from view of door L.*)

(*ROYCE enters door L.*)

ROYCE. Julius, where's that drink? (*JULIUS rushes to the table. ROYCE sees Miss ELLIOTT*)

ROYCE. Oh, good-morning, Miss Elliott.

JULIUS. (*Up to door*) Morning! Lawd man—it's the middle of the afternoon. (*ROYCE glares at JULIUS and JULIUS exits slowly, stooping and going around the door*)

BETH. (*Crosses to L., meets ROYCE c.*) I have a telegram for you, Mr. Royce. Collect charges—the cashier said I must have your O. K. before she could pay them.

ROYCE. (*He signs the envelope*) She's quite a stickler for routine. (*As BETH offers the telegram, tries to take her hand*) Are you going to forgive me for what I said last night? I've no excuse, except that I was jealous.

BETH. Jealous? What has given you the right to be jealous?

ROYCE. Jealousy isn't a matter of right. You promised to walk home with me yesterday afternoon and you went with Blake. I'm ashamed to say, I tried to console myself, and I wasn't quite myself last night. Won't you understand and overlook it?

BETH. I suppose I must.

ROYCE. And we are friends again?

BETH. Friends? I can't rush into friendship, Mr. Royce. (*Turning from him, going little to R.*)

ROYCE. You wern't so reserved with Blake. (*Turning, tearing open envelope, moving to left and*



*crushing envelope in hand*) At least not to hear him tell it.

BETH. The envelope, please. (ROYCE *hands the envelope to her*) Thank you. (BETH *turns to go. ROYCE is reading the telegram*)

ROYCE. Damn! (*Crumpling the telegram fiercely in his hand. BETH turns, startled*) Miss Elliott— (*She turns*) this telegram concerns you.

BETH. Me? (*Up c. by door*)

ROYCE. Your land has been sold.

BETH. (*Stunned*) My land sold! My land sold?

ROYCE. Yes, bid in this morning at the tax sale.

BETH. (*Coming down to chair R. of table*) Who could have done this thing?

ROYCE. Blake.

BETH. Mr. Blake! I don't believe you. (ROYCE *hands her the telegram. Reading*) "Sorry you missed the sale."

ROYCE. You don't question this?

BETH. No, it's my own handwriting. I took it over the wire this morning? I thought the sale referred to merchandise. Why should he want my land?

ROYCE. Why? (*He points to the words on the telegram and reads*) "I'm going to milk that railroad dry"—That's why.

BETH. What does it mean?

ROYCE. That your land's worth a lot of money, and that Blake has it—(*Putting telegram on table*) that's what it means, damn him! (*Going L.*)

BETH. (*Sitting in chair R. of table*) A lot of money—my land—how?

ROYCE. (*Facing front*) The railroad wants to put in another spur of track at the Junction, and they have got to have your land to do it.

BETH. Why should Mr. Blake think the land the railroad wanted was mine? You see, there must be some mistake. He could know nothing—(*Pause*)

Why, yes, he did! I told him myself. (ROYCE turns) I described its exact location.

ROYCE. You told Blake? (*Up to table*) A man you never saw until yesterday? (*Going down L.*) Blake has a great way with women—(*She notes this*) but I didn't think he was as quick as all that. You, of all women! (*Up to table L.*) How did you happen to talk to him at all?

BETH. He made some inquiries at the window.

ROYCE. A scheme to get in conversation with you!

BETH. Oh, no, Mr. Royce, he had been carried beyond his destination, he had intended to get off at the Junction.

ROYCE. A fake, a fake pure and simple. (*Up-stage*)

BETH. What I have told you is true. He was very amusing; we had lunch together. (*Turns. ROYCE makes movement*) I told him of the land and all it meant to me; but why should he send this wire to you? (*Turning round*)

ROYCE. (*Down to table back*) To rub it in. He knew that I was in love with you. (*She turns away*) Oh, every one has seen it but you. He knew that I had intended going over to bid it in. That's why he got me drunk—drugged me—had me locked in this room—so that he could sneak over to the Junction and do us both.

BETH. But you intended to bid it in! Why?

ROYCE. (*Disconcerted at first*) You hadn't the money to pay your taxes, you wouldn't accept it from me; I was going to resell it to the railroad for you through Mr. Drury, who was coming here to-day to close the deal.

BETH. Why didn't you tell me all this?

ROYCE. I wanted to surprise you. I thought gratitude might win you where other means had failed. Then last night, when I discovered that the

rumor was out, I decided to go at once before anyone here could get ahead of us.

BETH. Everybody here knows that a tax title is worthless—(ROYCE starts—turning to him) Why—for the moment I'd forgotten it myself.

ROYCE. Worthless! (*Steps back*)

BETH. Yes, I have six months in which to buy the land back.

ROYCE. You have? Then Blake wasn't so smart. (*Coming round to L. of table and to front*) There's a trick he's overlooked. We'll beat him yet. (*To table*) If you won't take the money from me, see Mr. Drury. I only want to help you to be rid of Blake at once and for all time.

BETH. (*After pause*) To be rid of him at once and for all time. (*There is a pause. BETH sits staring in front of her, ROYCE watching her narrowly*)

(MRS. BABBIT *rushes in*. ROYCE *goes to L.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Down to BETH*) Why, Beth, you poor dear, I've just heard the news; ain't it awful? Met Mrs. Dawson—she just got back from the Junction and says your land's been bought in. She talked so much I couldn't get a word out of her. Who did it?

ROYCE. Blake.

MRS. BABBIT. Blake—that drummer feller? And him so well spoken—such genteel manners—so plump and pleasing.

ROYCE. And so slick. (*Moving left and facing them*)

MRS. BABBIT. The minute I heard it I rushed right over to the depot. (*Moving toward BETH*) gimlet. Well—who ever would look for such deceit I knew you'd want me near you in such a crisis. I finally wormed where you were out of Crabb—(*Crosses to c.*) though I thought I'd have to use a in a fat man? (*Moving round back of BETH*) You

poor dear—come right to me! We'll go over to the hotel and have a cup of tea. Things have a way of looking brighter after a good cup of tea. (BETH at the first word of womanly sympathy begins to break down) Now, dearie—(BETH begins to cry, MRS. BABBIT consoles her; looks at ROYCE over BETH'S bowed head, and motions for him to leave the room. She forms the words with her mouth, but does not articulate audibly "Go away and let her have a good cry"—ROYCE does not at first comprehend. MRS. BABBIT repeats it—ROYCE exits c. door) There, there, dearie—don't you worry—there's some way out of this—I don't see it yet—(Putting hand to her forehead) but I'll get my brain to working presently! (Moving c.)

BETH. Oh, it isn't the land. I can buy it back.

MRS. BABBIT. Then what on earth are you crying about?

BETH. (Turning to front) The humiliation—the humiliation—when I think of last night!

MRS. BABBIT. (Interrupting) Last night?

BETH. When you were in the other room, letting him make love to me—believing his story of love at first sight—wanting to believe it—he seemed so honest—and all a trick to help him cheat me—how he must have laughed at me for a little simpleton—and those other men—I suppose they laughed with him—made a joke of me—as everyone else in this place will—when they hear the news—and will gossip and wonder at me—me! Oh, to be tricked and humiliated—and to care! How can I care? I haven't a scrap of pride left.

MRS. BABBIT. (Moving toward her) Care? You don't mean—you—

BETH. (Interrupting) Oh, yes, he swept me off my feet. (Pause. Rising and going L. to end of table) To think I might have loved him! Now I despise—I hate him!

MRS. BABBIT. (Moving nearer) That's right.

there ain't any man that stands in shoe leather that's worth a woman's tears.

BETH. (*Partly facing MRS. BABBIT and up-stage*) I'll be even with him. I'll teach Mr. Blake there's one woman who can't be tricked, humiliated and laughed at. Oh, what must you think of me? (*Bowing head*)

MRS. BABBIT. I can't find it in my heart to blame you, dearie. He was an attractive devil. Old as I am and suspicious by nature—well, he certainly had a way with him. (*Turning to BETH*) What are you going to do?

BETH. Mr. Royce has asked me to see Mr. Drury.

MRS. BABBIT. Be careful—let this be a lesson to you—and him so fat and genial—men are deceivers ever—but what's a woman to do? You can't live with 'em or without 'em. (*Crosses R. to desk*)

(*Enter ROYCE, followed by DRURY. ROYCE to L. C. DRURY C.*)

ROYCE. Miss Elliott, let me present my employer, Mr. Drury.

(*Before BETH can acknowledge the introduction, DRURY advances cordially. MRS. BABBIT primps, fixing tie, etc.*)

DRURY. I'm glad to meet you, Miss Elliott. I'd like to have a talk with you a few minutes—alone. (*The last he says pointedly at MRS. BABBIT who, at first, pleased at the idea of meeting DRURY, is now furious*)

BETH. I have no secrets from Mrs. Babbit.

ROYCE. Mrs. Babbit, let me—

MRS. BABBIT. (*Interrupting*) Don't waste your breath, Mr. Royce. (*Crossing to door c. between*

DRURY and ROYCE. DRURY *crossing to R. of desk*  
I don't have to have a house fall on me to take a hint. Good-bye, dearie.

(DRURY is annoyed, but proceeds to make the best of it.)

DRURY. I meant no offense, Madam. I did not intend to be rude.

MRS. BABBIT. No, it's just your way. You're one of those rough diamonds. Well, I'll have mine polished, thank you. (*Exits, slamming the door c.*)

DRURY. (*Coming toward c.*) Blake's been up to his old tricks again. I'm sorry you're the victim this time, Miss Elliott.

BETH. So Mr. Blake has done this before?

DRURY. He's always been a bit unscrupulous in his methods. He's a great chap with the women. you can't sell ladies' suits without the gift of gab; but, although anything's fair to-day in business, an offense of this kind can't go unpunished.

BETH. I've no desire to punish Mr. Blake. I don't care to have any further dealings with him — (*Going up c.*—ROYCE *drops down back of table*)

DRURY. You'll have to, Miss Elliott, if you want to recover that land. (*She stops*) You don't strike me as the sort of young woman to sacrifice your future through any sense of false pride.

BETH. But must I sink my pride to beg humbly for what he took from me?

ROYCE. (*Quickly*) You don't have to beg. You have only to demand. (*Coming down to chair R. of table*)

BETH. But I haven't the money to make such a demand. (*Looking at ROYCE*)

DRURY. That's where I come in. Royce tells me that you can buy back your land from Blake. I'll give you the money.

BETH. Oh, no, thank you, Mr. Drury, you see I have six months—(*Starts to door c.*)

DRURY. (*Interrupting*) One moment, you can't afford to wait six months. We must stop this here and now. We must get to that railroad before Blake has time to make another move.

BETH. But the land is mine.

DRURY. If Blake sells to the railroad they'll rush in improvements and you would have to pay them for the land *and* the improvements.

ROYCE. Would she be obliged to do that?

DRURY. That is the law. (*Crossing to L.*)

BETH. Oh, this leaves me helpless.

DRURY. Not at all. You couldn't fight a corporation. (*Moving down R.*) But I can. How much will you owe Blake?

BETH. About four hundred dollars.

DRURY. (*Going to chair at desk*) Here, I'll give you the check to pay off Blake, and I'll buy your land. (*Pause—turning in chair*) Let me see—does five thousand dollars strike you as a fair price? (*Then turns back and writes check*)

BETH. (*Delighted*) Five thousand dollars!

ROYCE. Why, it's a fortune. This is very generous of you, Mr. Drury.

BETH. It's too generous. I can't be under such obligations. (*Coming nearer desk*)

DRURY. No obligations. It's business. I'll resell to the railroad, possibly at a small profit. (*Rising*) But even if I lose by the contract, I am ready and willing to do this for you. I couldn't have it said that an employee of Martin Drury's would cheat a woman. It would reflect on the firm.

ROYCE. (*Eagerly*) You'll accept this offer?

BETH. (*After a pause*) I don't know what to do. (*Moving to c.*)

DRURY. Oh, you're not going to let Blake cheat you.

ROYCE. And laugh at you.

DRURY. Why not laugh at him? He's a smart boy, but you're a clever woman. (*Taking her by her L. arm, leading her to his desk*) Why not beat him at his own game? Punish him in his pocket-book; that's the worst punishment you can inflict on any man. Come, here is the check for four hundred dollars for Blake; you'll have to endorse it over to him.

(*BETH goes to desk, sits, takes the pen from DRURY, and is about to endorse it; then hesitates.*)

BETH. (*Turning to DRURY*) I'm so bewildered—I'm so alone—I've no experience of business or men. It's my ignorance against your knowledge. I know you have little to gain, but everything I have is at stake. Forgive my doubt, Mr. Drury, but why do you wish to do this for me?

(*DRURY is confused, ROYCE anxious. They are watching BETH, when the door opens and BLAKE appears.*)

BLAKE. Hello, Franklin, old top!

ROYCE. Blake! (*By table L.*)

(*BETH starts to rise, but DRURY lays a restraining hand on her shoulder and advances so that he screens her from BLAKE.*)

BLAKE. Well, I beat you to it? Get my wire? Sorry I had to send it collect, but those taxes and my long-distance chat with the president of the railroad took all my loose change. Sorry I was late, Mr. Drury. (*Taking off gloves, coat, and hanging coat on rack*)



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DRURY. So you bought Miss Elliott's land to-day? (*At end of desk*)

BLAKE. Aren't peeved, are you? (*In c. near door*)

DRURY. I'm disgusted at your dishonorable dealings.

BLAKE. You're there strong with Bible-class talk, but it doesn't listen well coming from you, and this isn't your scrap, Mr. Drury. (*Looking at ROYCE*)

DRURY. I'm going to make it my scrap.

BLAKE. Just hungry for trouble! But you can't get any rise out of me. I'm wearing that original smile that won't wipe off. (*Smiles*) For I've just turned a neat little trick in real estate. (*BETH turns to desk*) Had some inside information. (*Putting hat on rack. BETH endorses check*) Kind of tough on my old pal, Frank.

DRURY. (*Going down L.*) You see, Miss Elliott. (*Goes around BETH to R.*)

(*BLAKE, who has been putting his hat on rack, stops an instant and pauses.*)

BLAKE. Miss Elliott! (*He looks at DRURY and ROYCE, then comes easily towards BETH, offering to shake hands*) This is a surprise! I've been wearing out my congress gaiters looking for you.

(*DRURY gets check.*)

BETH. I'm glad you've found me, Mr. Blake. (*Crossing to L. in front of table*) It saves me the trouble of looking for you.

BLAKE. Why, what's little Bobbie done now? (*Following BETH to L. DRURY moves up to desk*) Won't you come across with a few kind words that will elucidate this greeting frappe? (*She looks at him, then silently hands him the tei-*

*gram. BLAKE reads it. Slight pause*) Don't let this keep you awake nights. Come out on the back porch and I'll explain. *(Moving towards her, he goes to take her arm. BETH resents it)*

BETH. Explain? You're found out, and you think to escape the consequences by making a joke of it all. Explain? You bought my land to-day, didn't you?

BLAKE. *(Pause)* I was at the sale. *(Crossing to c.)*

BETH. I want my land!

BLAKE. Why? *(He puts his hand in his pocket, from which he half draws a paper, then stops)*

DRURY. *(Interrupting)* Why? Because I've made her an offer and she has accepted it. *(ROYCE and DRURY watch BETH eagerly. Slight pause)*

BETH. Yes, I've accepted it.

*(DRURY takes check from desk, looking at endorsement. BLAKE puts the paper back in his pocket and slaps his pocket significantly.)*

BLAKE. Now, wait a minute: this thing's got me going! You don't mean to say that you've sold your land to them?

BETH. Yes.

*(ROYCE and DRURY smile with relief.)*

BLAKE. You can't do that. Don't you see they're a couple of sharks, conning you with a few hundreds?

BETH. Hundreds? How little you know, then. They've given me thousands! You, after what you've done, dare to stand there defaming them?

BLAKE. Defaming them? This pair of second story workers? You're in the wrong. They've never been in business for their health. Anything

they may have handed you, no matter what it looks like, is a lemon.

BETH. How dare you trick and cheat me, and then laugh?

BLAKE. Laugh? Me? I'm an endless chain of misery. You'll be sorry you've spoken to me like this; you have it framed up all wrong.

BETH. Mr. Royce has disclosed your treachery to me.

BLAKE. He's a healthy one to talk about treachery! He's handed out a lot of information. Did he happen to tip it off that he intended to go over and buy in your property?

BETH. Yes—to protect me from you. (*She goes up-stage*)

BLAKE. Royce, you're immense. (*Bowing mockingly to ROYCE*) But you don't believe him? (*Going up c. to BETH*)

BETH. And did you think I'd believe you? Believe the word of a man that I never saw until yesterday, against the word of this man who has proven himself my friend?

BLAKE. Your friend? Somebody's been stringing you. He's trying to cheat you and has called in our friend on my right to help him. (*Looking at DRURY*)

DRURY. (*Moving over to BLAKE*) Be careful, Blake, I don't like these references to me and I may not overlook them.

BETH. It's too bad about you, but you never did have a sincere regard for the truth! (*Looking toward ROYCE*)

DRURY. (*Moving nearer to BLAKE*) The truth? You!

BLAKE. (*Turning on DRURY—interrupting*) Don't say it—your age protects you—but don't get reckless.

DRURY. (*Looking at check in his hand*) Come now, Blake, I'm old, but I'm not—foolish. You

thought you had a good thing! I like you, but I'm disappointed in you. (*Moving down R.*) Do the right thing by this girl.

BLAKE. Just keep cases on little Bobbie. He's going to do the right thing by this girl; you pikers won't steal her land and get away with it—not with me on the job!

ROYCE. (*Coming to front of table*) If you thought I wanted to rob her, why didn't you go to her last night? She was just across the hall with Mrs. Babbit.

BETH. (*Coming down a step*) Why didn't you come to me?

BLAKE. There was no time to lose. (*Moving nearer BETH*) I did what seemed best for you.

BETH. (*She moves away from him to front of table L.*) Lies—lies—all lies! (*Turning to BLAKE*) You did what seemed best for me. You thought only of cheating me; you knew my land was of value. Oh, yes, you knew the railroad's plans made it of value. You had inside information. You turned a neat little trick in real estate; you schemed to outwit me, to steal my land, to sell it to the railroad—

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) No—no—that is not true. I did it solely for you. (*Coming to table L.*)

BETH. Then if you did this all solely for me, why don't you give me my land?

BLAKE. Give you your land—to sell it for a song to them? No, I'll save you in spite of yourself.

BETH. You'll save me? (*Moving across R. to DRURY*) I'll save myself. Mr. Drury, the check, please. (*DRURY gives her the check. She crosses to the table, placing check on it*) There—I buy it back. (*Starting to go up-stage*) If the price were more I'd pay it to you.

BLAKE. No, I refuse to sell it to you. I refuse to let you ruin yourself.

BETH. You must take this check. (*Turning*)

BLAKE. No!

BETH. You will have to take this check. You were very clever, Mr. Blake, but you weren't clever enough: you forget that the law protects women from cheats like you; you didn't know that I could refund you the money you paid for my land, that I had six months in which to reclaim it. That you overlooked, didn't you?

BLAKE. Miss Elliott! Beth!

BETH. (*She goes up to the door*) You thought me a silly little country girl, flattered by the shop-worn attentions of a drummer; you thought to cheat a woman—insult her with your love, while you robbed her, win her heart, perhaps—and then pass on and laugh. But it's the silly little country girl who laughs and laughs and laughs! (*She bursts into a hysterical fit of laughter and exits in a furious rage, her laughter dying away in the distance*)

BLAKE. (*Against table—back of it—turning to audience*) Well, I've a hoodoo that's twins.

DRURY. Blake, I'm sorry for you. (*Going to chair at desk. BLAKE looks at DRURY*)

BLAKE. Then if you're sorry for me, take your money out of this deal. Let Royce and I fight it out alone. If he has spunk enough to fight fair—(*Looking hard at ROYCE*)

ROYCE. (*Interrupting*) You're a fine one to talk about fighting fair! You forget, you got me drunk. (*Coming a little to R.*)

BLAKE. I fight a crook with a crook's weapons.

DRURY. We've got you, Blake—(*Sitting*)

BLAKE. (*Over to desk*) Give me a chance, Drury. I've always worked for your best interests. I've never asked a favor—I do so now. I don't give a hoot about myself—but—she's the whole thing to me. I'm begging for the girl I love. Give her a square deal.

DRURY. I've given her a square deal; I'm giving her more than she can get out of the railroad.

BLAKE. What are you giving her? (*Leaning on desk*)

DRURY. Five thousand dollars.

BLAKE. Five thousand dollars! Aren't you afraid you'll sprain your bank account? Why, you know that right of way's worth anything she asks for it. I won't believe that this is your scheme—Royce has doped this trick out for you.

DRURY. There's no trick about it, I've made her an offer and she's accepted it. That's business.

BLAKE. Business isn't stealing candy from infants.

DRURY. Business is business.

BLAKE. Then you won't back *out* of this deal?

DRURY. Did you ever know me to *back out*?

BLAKE. Then we go to the mat.

DRURY. (*Laughingly*) No, the fight's over.

BLAKE. You think you've got that girl hipped, but you haven't; you've only got her dazzled by a few thousand that aren't a flea bite to what she's going to get.

DRURY. Oh, is she?

BLAKE. *You bet she is!* You'll take your money out of this deal or I'll show you up as you are. (*DRURY smiles*) I know a few things about your business methods that wouldn't look dressy in print. (*DRURY shows that he's alarmed*) You keep your hands off that land of Beth Elliott's, for if this is to be a scrap, you'll take the count. (*Turning back to DRURY*)

DRURY. After all, why should she come between old friends? (*BLAKE turns away*) Maybe we can boost that offer a couple of thousand. We haven't closed with Miss Elliott yet.

BLAKE. You haven't closed with her yet?

DRURY. No, we haven't given her that check for \$5,000.

BLAKE. You haven't? Oh, this is a pipe! (*Going up c.*)

ROYCE. (*Turning quickly—smashing fist on table*) This deal is closed.

BLAKE. Closed. Oh, make a noise like a hoop and roll away! You haven't gotten to her with your money yet. (*Coming down c.*)

ROYCE. What's that's to you? This check put you out of it.

BLAKE. (*Slowly and quietly*) You can't rush me. I'm going to take my time; all I need is time to find Beth Elliott—(*ROYCE and DRURY laugh. To ROYCE*) Oh, you can laugh, but I'm going to hand you the longest, largest laugh of your existence. But I'll be doing the smiling. (*To DRURY*) You had me whipped for a minute or two, but I've got my second wind. I'm going to Beth Elliott, for now I can tell her the truth. The land's never been mine. She's always owned it. She owns it now. I only paid the taxes.

ROYCE. Why didn't you tell her here?

BLAKE. Because I thought you had her cinched—that she had sold it to you and taken the coin. But you've given the snap away. Oh, this is like getting money from home! (*Turning up c.*)

DRURY. Don't be foolish, Blake. I'll make it worth your while. I'll give you a bit of it.

ROYCE. No, I'm damned if you do!

DRURY. You'll do what I say. Come, Blake, can't we compromise?

BLAKE. (*Coming to desk*) No. Compromise with you and rob her! Do you think you can buy me to do up the woman I love? I'm not one of your tools that you can get to do your dirty work—line their pockets while they fill yours! You've made me sell a few goods that weren't all wool and a yard wide, but you can't make me a common thief! Compromise, you damned old bandit? To hell with your compromise!

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE:—*Same as ACT II. One hour later. Rise of curtain discloses BLAKE'S room with the sample tables stripped of their 'contents.*

DISCOVERED: BLAKE closing and locking a sample trunk.

JULIUS enters, wheeling a small porter's truck.  
BLAKE helps him put trunk on the truck.  
Gives him a tip.

BLAKE. Now, you understand, you take all these sample trunks to the Widow Stratton's store; tell the cashier that Mr. Royce will take charge of them. (*Giving coin*)

JULIUS. (*Wheeling around towards door*) How about yo' personal baggage?

(BLAKE crossing to R. table.)

BLAKE. (*By table*) Let you know about that later. (*He looks at his watch nervously, then crosses to window, front of table*)

(JULIUS is wheeling out the truck.)

BLAKE. Julius.

JULIUS. Yes, sah?

BLAKE. Bring me a bottle of beer and a sandwich.

JULIUS. Yes, sah. (*Putting down trunk*) What sorta sandwich you prefer? (JULIUS is c.)

BLAKE. Any old thing.

JULIUS. Yes, sah, that's what we make sand-



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wiches outa. What's yo' preference as to the fillin'?

BLAKE. (*Looking out window R.*) Wonder where Watts is?

JULIUS. How'd you like a nice cannibal? You know, raw meat chopped up fine?

BLAKE. No—no——

JULIUS. Lemme suggest a Sapho.

BLAKE. (*Coming to R. c. of table*) A what?

JULIUS. Mighty temptin' is a Sapho. Its consistency is a young aig, fried, mos' tenderly repasin' on a juicy slice a onion of Spanish birth. Very hot stuff is a Sapho.

BLAKE. (*Furiously*) Say, you get me a sandwich.

JULIUS. (*Starts*) Yes, sir. (*Exits with trunk*)

(BLAKE goes over to window, then turns toward window. JULIUS is at door. WATTS enters. They each try to get out of the other's way.)

WATTS. What's the idea? (*Coming down L.*)

BLAKE. (*Coming over to Watts*) Did you find her?

WATTS. No.

BLAKE. (*R.*) I might have known you'd fall down. (*He walks away disgustedly up-stage*)

WATTS. (*L.*) I like that! Me burning up the boardwalk to oblige you! Lots of thanks I get.

BLAKE. (*R. turning to him*) Where did you go? (*Coming down*)

WATTS. Depot—boarding-house—depot——

BLAKE. (*Going up-stage*) I told you I'd been there. (*Towards WATTS and then up c.*)

WATTS. Well, I thought she might have doubled on the trail. Nothing doing.

BLAKE. Where can she be? (*Coming down-stage to him*) Where have you been all this time?

WATTS. Standin' round street corners rubberin'

at every woman in sight. Within an ace of being shoved in the lockup by the village constable for flirtin'. Even went over to the store, thinking, she might have gone there again. Not on the premises.

BLAKE. Were Royce and Drury there?

WATTS. No.

BLAKE. How did you get the information?

WATTS. Made love to that vinegary old dame, Royce's cashier.

BLAKE. Is that the way you fool around? Is that all you think about? Even in a time like this, isn't any skirt immune? (*Crosses to front of table R.*)

WATTS. You bet *she* is! (*BLAKE turns*) Only did it to further your interests. You forget that I took my life in my hands. (*BLAKE moves away to R.*) She was a tight-wad as far as news was concerned, but after a few broad-guage compliments she loosened up.

BLAKE. Suppose they may have found her? (*Crossing to R. front of table*)

WATTS. Do you think Miss Elliott was at the boarding-house when you called?

BLAKE. (*Turning to Watts*) Crabb thought she had gone there, but it wasn't her day at home—at least she wasn't receiving Bob Blake. Suppose she's sitting there having a talk with them now.

WATTS. What difference would that make? You said she had accepted their offer.

BLAKE. Yes, but when I left home to locate her, she hadn't committed herself for keeps. (*Pause*) She hadn't received the check for the five thousand.

WATTS. (*Slowly*) Oh, I see. (*WATTS looks at BLAKE*)

BLAKE. Drury let that cat out of the bag. (*Front of table*) If she could only be found, only persuaded to hang on—now that I've saved her

property. When I made that bluff I didn't suppose for a moment that anyone could disappear off the face of the earth in a jerkwater town of this size.

WATTS. It looks as though they had you beat. (*Sympathetically*)

BLAKE. (*At table, turning*) Not on your life! I've still a chance if I can find her, and I'd give a year's salary to do it.

WATTS. That's good—when you haven't a job in sight.

BLAKE. That doesn't worry me; I haven't thought about it. (*Pause*) I can't think of anything but her.

WATTS. Well, you're certainly there with the love-at-first-sight gag, strong.

BLAKE. Love at first sight? Watts, I was hit by a cyclone.

WATTS. If this is the best it does for you, and I see it coming my way, me for the cellar!

BLAKE. (*Moving over to window*) Talk's cheap. Where can she be?

WATTS. (*Coming across to table R.*) If any woman told me I wasn't on the level it would detain me for a moment. (*Sits chair back of table*)

BLAKE. (*Over at window*) She did put the knife in and turn it around. (*Turning from window*)

WATTS. She jumped to conclusions mighty quickly.

BLAKE. (*Comes to chair R. of table*) You can't blame her. When you frame it up in cold blood, their arguments did seem reasonable. She didn't know me; I was only a chance acquaintance.

WATTS. It seemed to me last night from the point of an unprejudiced observer, that for a chance acquaintance you were going some.

BLAKE. You should have heard her to-day; talk about reading the riot act! But I wouldn't care a continental about that if I could only find her—

(*Moves across stage and crosses to chair L.*)—see her—save her! To think she's going to lose by a brace game—it's fierce.

WATTS. (*Is seated*) Well, you've done all you can; no use letting this get on your digestion. Come on, Blake, there are others.

BLAKE. (c.) Oh, don't Wattsie, don't. (*Turning to WATTS*)

WATTS. I only meant to cheer you up. I hate to see you like this.

BLAKE. (*Toward chair L. of table*) You don't think I'm stuck on feeling like this? I'm having a devil of a lovely time! (*Sitting L. of table*)

WATTS. Last night you were at concert pitch.

BLAKE. This minute I'm down somewhere below the G string. (*Pause*) Oh, blow the happy holiday season! A man gets feeling so blue and lonely, he's liable to catch anything, with the pores of his heart all open.

WATTS. And you don't deserve it, Bob; you've always been on the square with women.

BLAKE. Maybe I haven't. Maybe I'm getting paid for something I've done somewhere, somehow. Gee, but it's an awful price; it's so hopeless—I can't see daylight ahead—all I can see is her, looking at me with hate in her eyes. Wattsie, several times in my life I've seemed to hit the jumping off place. Once when I was broke with others depending on me, and me the only thing between them and misery—I stood on the brink and looked over. Then, when my mother died—I thought I'd gone the limit. But this—this being in love—is Simon-pure hell.

WATTS. (*After pause*) I know, old man, I know.

BLAKE. (*Looks at WATTS—pointedly*) What do you think of me sitting here drooling like a love-sick idiot, while those thieves may be sitting in the

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boarding-house robbing her? (BLAKE goes for hat and coat on table by c. door)

WATTS. (*Rising, putting chair up and moving to R.*) Where are you going? What are you going to do?

BLAKE. (*Stopping*) I'm going back to that boarding-house and I'm going to see Beth Elliott, if I have to break in the door to do it.

WATTS. Keep your clothes on. You can't do that. It would be a lovely finish to this mess—you pinched for house-breaking.

(JULIUS knocks and enters with tray.)

JULIUS. Heah yo' refreshment, sah.

BLAKE. (*Up c.*) Take it away—I don't want it. I haven't time—(*Moving down L. a little*)

WATTS. Hold on, now; eat something before you go.

BLAKE. No, no, I couldn't.

WATTS. Oh, be sensible.

(JULIUS brings tray, etc., to table R., standing above chair L. of table.)

BLAKE. Eat? The way I feel? (*Coming down-stage to L. c.*)

WATTS. An empty heart will fit a lot more comfortably over a full stomach. Julius, do this again for me. (*Coming down R. c.*)

JULIUS. (*Over his shoulder*) Yes, sah—(*Pause*) Bring it right up soon as I serve some moh tea to Mrs. Babbit an' her lady fren'.

BLAKE. What lady friend?

JULIUS. Miss Elliott:

(BLAKE and WATTS start.)

BLAKE. Is she here?

JULIUS. Yes, sah—(*Pause*)—right across the hall with Mrs. Babbit.

BLAKE. (*Starting for WATTS*) Why in H——? Why didn't you think that she might be with Mrs. Babbit?

WATTS. Look here, I'm not the goat! Why didn't you?

BLAKE. (*Moving to L.*) My brain hasn't been working overtime the last twenty-four hours.

WATTS. No, your heart's kept you busy.

BLAKE. (*Starting for door c.*) I'm going in there!

WATTS. Back up, Blake, you've got it all your own way. (*BLAKE turns*) Now, let's see how the land lays. (*To JULIUS*) How long's Miss Elliott been with Mrs. Babbit?

JULIUS. (*At table, pouring beer into glass*) About an hour.

BLAKE. (*Coming down L. c.*) Then she came straight here!

WATTS. Have you seen Miss Elliott?

JULIUS. Yes, sah.

BLAKE. How does she seem?

JULIUS. Seems mighty po'rly. (*Pause*) 'Pears to me they's havin' troublous times 'cross the hall. (*Coming to L. side of table, in front of chair*)

BLAKE. What do you mean? How do you know?

JULIUS. I knows I'se served one portion a tea an' now they's ordered moh.

WATTS. What's that got to do with it?

JULIUS. Guess you ain't acquainted with the ways of females?

WATTS. (*Smiling*) No, we're in the amateur class.

BLAKE. Cut out that comedy. Go on, Julius.

JULIUS. (*Turns to BLAKE*) One order a tea's usually enough for a woman's ordinary cryin' spell, but when they jes' naturally wallows in it, you want to look out for hysterics.

WATTS. Is Mrs. Babbit crying?

JULIUS. Mrs. Babbit cryin'? I'd certainly like to get a glimpse of the person who could make that woman cry! She's fightin' mad, she jest sits there a rockin' herself to death an' ejaculatin' "I told you so—I warnt you against these drummers—" (BLAKE and WATTS annoyed. Turns to BLAKE) Miss Elliott jes' moan an' wail, like to cry her haid plumb off. Mrs. Babbit say Miss Elliott sufferin' from a misery in the haid. Looks to Julius like it was a misery in de heart! (JULIUS exits)

WATTS. Poor kid! (BLAKE starts to follow JULIUS to c. door) Are you clean batty?

BLAKE. I tell you I'm going in there.

WATTS. Do you want to crab everything?

BLAKE. How?

WATTS. Don't be a chump. You can't force your way into that room. You haven't any warrant to serve. You're no sheriff; Miss Elliott has refused to have anything to do with you; you wouldn't have any better luck with Mrs. Babbit; she's heard Beth's story; she wouldn't even allow you to come in, let alone listen to you.

BLAKE. (Coming down toward WATTS) If that's the best you can do in the way of advice—on your way. She'll have to listen to me. (Going up c. a little) I've a card up my sleeve. (Starting up to door)

WATTS. (R. c.) Don't play it too soon. Let me go and persuade her to see you.

BLAKE. (Coming toward him) No, do you think I've lost my nerve? I know what I'm doing. (Pause) I may not know *all* about women, but that crying spell looks to me as though a thaw had set in and the ice was moving. (Moving L.)

WATTS. (After laugh) For Heaven's sake, sit tight—(Going little to L. by chair L. of table) just a moment, and let me go. (He goes down to table) I'm not exactly pining for the job. Blessed are the

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peacemakers—but for you, Bob, I'm willing to get mine.

(BLAKE stops WATTS who has started up-stage.  
JULIUS enters.)

JULIUS. (*Coming to c.*) Excuse me, Mistah Blake, but I wants to ask you about them trunks.

BLAKE. What about them?

JULIUS. Mr. Royce says he don't want them over to the store; he wants 'em sent to the depot. Whose orders is I am to obey?

BLAKE. Royce? Where is he? (*Turning toward JULIUS*)

JULIUS. He's downstairs.

BLAKE and WATTS. Downstairs? WATTS *sits chair L. of table*)

JULIUS. (*c.*) Yes, sah, with that millionaire gentleman from Indiamanopolis.

BLAKE. How long have they been here?

JULIUS. Just come. I'm takin' their cards up to Miss Elliott. (*He shows cards on tray in right hand*)

BLAKE. What luck! (*He takes them off the tray, goes into his pocket*) Julius, there's a ten-dollar note for you if you'll forget to deliver those cards.

JULIUS. What?

BLAKE. You give me those cards; you take this ten-dollar bill and chase yourself!

JULIUS. (*Starts to door c., then turns*) Where am I to go to?

BLAKE. Oh, I don't care. (*After laugh*) Go up in the attic and play dead.

JULIUS. (*Turning from BLAKE to go up*) But they may suspect collision between us.

BLAKE. How?

JULIUS. They asked me if you was here?

BLAKE. What did you say?

JULIUS. I say yes, sah.



(WATTS *shakes head.*)

BLAKE. That's bad. (*Pause*) Oh, Watts, you go downstairs——

WATTS. (*Rising*) What'll I do?

BLAKE. Fall over them accidentally, tell them I've gone out, button-hole 'em. I don't care what you do, but keep them there.

WATTS. Don't you worry; it's great I'm in training! Come on, you. (*He makes a few passes at JULIUS, who ducks. WATTS rushes out, BLAKE pushing JULIUS out after him*)

BLAKE. The attic for yours! (*JULIUS exits. BLAKE pulls himself together*)

BLAKE. It's up to you, Bob, now, for a little quick stuff. (*BLAKE goes across the hall and he knocks at the door. Pause. He knocks again violently. MRS. BABBIT comes to the door. BLAKE grasps her wrist and pulls her across the hall into his room well down-stage*)

MRS. BABBIT. Are you trying to kidnap me?

BLAKE. (*Closes the door*) I want to see you.

MRS. BABBIT. Looks like you wanted to kill me. Open that door.

BLAKE. I've got to talk to you. (*Coming to her*) and talk hard. (*She looks at him*) Oh, not about myself: about her—Beth!

MRS. BABBIT. You dare to take her name in vain after what you've done to my poor lamb? Traitor! (*Going down R. front of table*)

BLAKE. (*Interrupting*) Go slow.

MRS. BABBIT. Don't hector me, young fellow! Let me outa this. (*Moving little towards BLAKE*)

BLAKE. You've got to hear me: you'd do anything for Beth, wouldn't you?

MRS. BABBIT. Yes, but my God, I draw the line at bein' compromised! Open that door.

BLAKE. Don't worry, you're old enough to be my mother! (*Coming down L.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Going over to BLAKE*) How dare you insult my gray hairs?

BLAKE. Keep your shirt—!

MRS. BABBIT. (*Looks shocked—starts for him*) Sir!

BLAKE. (*Coming over to table L.*) Your shirt-waist on.

MRS. BABBIT. You're endangering my good name! The least you can do is respect my apparel. (*Going R. in front of table*)

BLAKE. (*Coming C.*) We mustn't quarrel.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Turning on him*) Who began it? Do you suppose for one moment any man kin drag me in by the hair a my head willy-nilly and expect me to smile and look pleasant!

BLAKE. My work may be a little rough but I mean well. Listen to me—(*Phone rings*)

MRS. BABBIT. I've heard all I want to.

BLAKE. But not all you're going to. (*Going to phone*) Hello! What? yes, Watts—(*Pause*) No, it isn't settled yet. (*Pause*) You can't hold them much longer. (*Pause*) Royce seems suspicious. (*Pause*) He's talking to the hotel clerk. Don't let him get by with anything. Keep on the job—(*At phone*) You see Royce and Drury are getting restless. I'm desperate. (*Coming over quickly to Mrs. BABBIT*)

MRS. BABBIT. Gracious powers and I'm alone! (*She falls back against table*)

BLAKE. I don't want to frighten you, but I must see Beth Elliott before they do.

MRS. BABBIT. And you think to use me as a go-between! (*Going up to him*) Young man, you've picked the wrong party: I'll have nothing to do with you. I've heard Beth's story and I believe it. (*Turning away*)

BLAKE. You mean you've heard Royce's yarn? Well, it's a lie from beginning to end. Now you're going to hear the truth.

MRS. BABBIT. The truth? You expect me to believe you, a drummer? (*Moving R.*)

BLAKE. There you go with that drummer thing again! We may sandbag people into buying goods, but we're not gold brick boys. I didn't expect that line of talk from you; I thought a woman of the world like you—would want to hear both sides of the case, not let yourself be hurried into a snap judgment.

MRS. BABBIT. Well? (*Sitting down chair L. of table R.*) What you gotta say for yourself?

BLAKE. Put anything you may think of me out of your mind. Leave it free to consider without prejudice several points in the deal I know you've overlooked; for a woman with your brains wouldn't take stock in the first story she heard; your judgments have been switched by your love for Beth. You say you believe her story. (*She turns*) You must admit she's telling you—(*She turns on him*) oh, in all good faith—Royce's side of the case. Have you always thought Royce was on the level?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Pausing*) Well, no, I haven't.

BLAKE. Do you think Royce the kind of man likely to do anything for nothing?

MRS. BABBIT. You bet he isn't. Why, he's stole the Widow Stratton blind.

BLAKE. Exactly, that's what he's trying to do with Beth. If he's giving her \$5,000 for her land, don't you know that it's worth more than that to him?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Pause*) I never thought o' that.

BLAKE. Stop and think a minute. (*Pause*) How would I, a stranger to Grand Crossing, who heard for the first time yesterday about Miss Elliott's property, have known what to do and how to get it, if someone hadn't given the snap away?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Turning*) You mean?

BLAKE. I mean that Royce sat in our poker game last night and began hitting it up until he got to the

stage where a drunken man sees big and talks large. He bragged about his inside information that Cobb had verified, and blew to us his little scheme to rob Beth.

MRS. BABBIT. I wish't I'd been there; I'd a massacred him.

BLAKE. I did better than that. (*Moving L.*) I got him drunk, jumped into his sleigh—

MRS. BABBIT. (*Interrupting*) His sleigh?

BLAKE. (*Gets deed from pocket*) Why, yes—he had it waiting outside, and I hiked to the sale.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Pause*) Ah, but you did what he was trying to do.

BLAKE. I didn't buy her land—(*Moving over to her. Pause*) I only paid her taxes. (*He shows her the receipt*) There is the receipt.

MRS. BABBIT. (*Pause—after looking at receipt*) Good heavens, man, why didn't you tell her?

BLAKE. I didn't have the chance—I didn't dare. Don't you understand when I dropped to the fact that she had accepted their offer I couldn't tell her before them that I had only paid her taxes. If they had known she owned the land, they would have given her the check for \$5,000 then and there, and the deal would have been closed.

MRS. BABBIT. I see it all now.

BLAKE. I was running a bluff—couldn't tip my hand—I didn't figure that she wouldn't believe that I was fair and square.

MRS. BABBIT. I might a knownd there was a nigger in the wood-pile! (*Rising*) What's to be done now? (*Facing him*)

BLAKE. There's still a chance. She hasn't that check and she must be prevented from taking it. You'll help me?

MRS. BABBIT. Help you, young man, my blood's boilin'! What do you want me to do? (*Comes over to him*)

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BLAKE. Go to her, give her this receipt and tell her to hang on like grim death.

MRS. BABBIT. Why don't you give it to her yourself. (*Giving BLAKE deed*)

BLAKE. She'll listen to you; she might put up an argument with me. Royce and Drury will be delivering those cards in person if we don't hurry. We mustn't waste time making gallery plays. Now, hustle! (*JULIUS knocks on door. BLAKE takes MRS. BABBIT to door c.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Heavens—my reputation's ruind!  
(*She exits quickly*)

(*JULIUS enters.*)

BLAKE. (*Goes down L.*) What do you want? Didn't I tell you to stay dead?

JULIUS. Yes, boss, but ain't it time for me to be resurrected?

BLAKE. No—back to the attic.

JULIUS. Why, they's gone.

BLAKE. What?

JULIUS. Sure; I seed from a window upstairs.

BLAKE. Where's Watts?

JULIUS. Mr. Watts went with 'em!

BLAKE. Good boy, Watts. (*Going over to window*) He's steered them off. That's all right. You're resurrected.

JULIUS. What about that clerk in the office?

BLAKE. I'll fix him. (*JULIUS goes. BLAKE crosses to window, looks out, shakes his fist. After JULIUS' exit*) I've beaten you!

(*BETH enters hurriedly, holding receipt in hand, followed by MRS. BABBIT, who crosses down back of table R.*)

BETH. (c.) Oh, Mr. Blake, why didn't you tell me what you had done? Why did you let me accuse

you? Why did you let me say those things to you? Things I can never forget.

BLAKE. They had you rattled. (*Crossing to BETH*) You didn't know what you were saying. You thought I had robbed you of your land.

BETH. Ah, no, it wasn't that I thought you had robbed me of my land, but of my faith in you. How can you forgive me?

BLAKE. (*Starts to embrace her*) That's easy.

MRS. BABBIT. (*From back of table*) You people got lots a time for that—there's twenty-four hours to every day, but these few minutes are precious. How's she goin' to get out a this?

BLAKE. That's all right.

BETH. But I've said I'll sell. I've given my word of honor.

BLAKE. You're not going to split hairs about your word of honor in dealing with a couple of sharps who *have* no honor.

BETH. But must I stoop to their level and give them the right to despise me as I despise them?

MRS. BABBIT. You gotta fight trickery with trickery. (*From back of table*)

BLAKE. There is no dishonor in that.

BETH. (*Taking a step to BLAKE*) Well, I place myself in your hands. What do you want me to do?

BLAKE. Refuse to take that check.

BETH. But I've accepted it.

MRS. BABBIT and BLAKE. (*Together*) Wha-at!

BETH. Yes. Mr. Royce—just a few moments ago—while Mrs. Babbit was in here, sent me the check by the clerk. I took it and signed a receipt.

BLAKE. That's why they went away! (*Pause*) They've beaten us. (*BLAKE sits L. of table*)

BETH. Oh, what does it matter? Money doesn't count. (*BETH goes back of BLAKE, then drops to R. of table above chair*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Coming down L. and c.*) That's what happens to an unprotected female! If you'd

had some man to take care of you—a husband—they could a whistled for their land.

BLAKE. What do you mean?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Coming over to BLAKE and BETH*) Check or no check, no married woman in this State can execute a deed without her husband's signature.

BLAKE. (*To BETH*) You haven't given them a deed yet?

BETH. (*Crossing to front of table*) No—(*Looking out of window*)

BLAKE. Bully for you, sister! (*He jumps up and kisses MRS. BABBIT—takes her up to door. She exits*) Well, it's all right. (*Coming down L.*)

BETH. (*Moving towards c.*) But I don't see.

BLAKE. (*c. and down*) You heard Sister Babbit? All you have to have is a husband.

BETH. But I haven't one.

BLAKE. We can soon fix that. Are you game? (*Coming to her*)

BETH. (*Going towards BLAKE*) Oh, yes, I'm game.

(*BLAKE goes toward her, is about to take her in his arms, when he stops and rushes to telephone.*)

BLAKE. Hello—hello—send up one minister and two witnesses, quick! (*Takes BETH in his arms*)

CURTAIN.

# THE CHARACTERS AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO CLOTHES.

MRS. BABBIT.—About 50 years of age.

1st Act—Wears coat and skirt of a dark heavy material, trimmed inappropriately with a lighter shade of braid—should suggest the effort of the village dressmaker. A silk shirt-waist in dark tone with ruching at collar and cuffs. Old-fashioned fur cape or set of mink furs. Woolen gloves, overshoes, white stockings. Small bonnet with rose and feather. Old-fashioned earrings and large brooch. Attached to the belt of her dress is a shabby chatelaine bag of leather.

2nd Act—A pink cashmere wrapper made with a Watteau pleat, and elaborately trimmed with white cotton lace. A different set of old-fashioned jewelry.

3rd Act—Same as first act.

4th Act—Skirt and silk shirt-waist worn in 1st Act.

MRS. DAWSON—A country woman of about thirty, pallid, a typical worn-out farm drudge.

Wears a checked woolen dress with a gathered flounce at bottom, to be very much "home made" in appearance—a dark blue or tan coat, very old style, large puffed sleeves, etc., a stiff round hat with a wing sticking up in front and a nondescript veil wound around the hat. A woolen muffler, woolen mits and overshoes. Hair done tightly back into a knot at back of her head.

MR. DAWSON.—A lanky "rube" about forty, full unkempt beard and scratch wig. Wears musty overcoat, nondescript trousers, top boots, cloth



cap and ear tails, woolen scarf and leather mitts.

**CRABB.**—Drooping grizzled moustache, grizzled wig, old trousers and old double-breasted blue coat, blue cap, red mittens and small woolen muffler inside coat, ends showing underneath. Spectacles.

**GILL.**—Jovial farmer about forty-five. Gray wig and gray chin whiskers, trousers in long top bots. Very heavy fancy vest and big shabby bear-or pony-skin coat, fur cap.

**LUELLA ANN DAWSON.**—About eight years old. Wears short home-made coat of woolen material over a skirt of plaid flannel. White woolen gaiters, white cotton drawers, white knitted leggings, white Tam o'Shanter pulled down over her ears, a tippet and small muff of imitation fur, red woolen mittens.

**WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, JR.**—About six years old. Wears coat and knee pants, evidently made from a discarded suit of his father's. Top-boots with "copper" toes, plush cap with ear-tabs, woolen scarf and pair of woolen mittens attached to a cord. At his first appearance, his ears are covered with the tabs of his cap, and his head is so wrapped in the scarf that only his eyes are visible.

**BETH ELLIOTT.**—

1st ACT.—Wears coat and skirt, white shirt-waist, black shoes, red sailor-hat with quill.

2nd ACT.—One-piece dress, coat, velvet hat with feather.

3rd ACT.—Same as first act.

4th ACT.—Skirt and shirt-waist same as 1st ACT.

**NOTE.**—**BETH** should be dressed becomingly, but her clothes must not be too modish and must not indicate lavish expenditure.

**BOB BLAKE.**—Wears brown sack suit—contrasting

ulster. Brown coat, brown shoes. He must suggest the well-dressed drummer. Nothing flashy in jewelry, ties or waistcoats. Same suit throughout the play.

TED WATTS.—About thirty. Ordinary business suit, dark overcoat and black derby. Same suit throughout the play.

KIMBALL.—About forty-five. Gloomy drummer. Dark blue sack suit, white shirt, old-fashioned turn-down collar and black tie. Stetson soft hat.

COBB.—Jovial drummer, about fifty. White haired, ruddy cheeks, loud black-and-white checked suit, white shirt and detachable cuffs; does not carry hat.

FRANKLYN ROYCE.—About thirty-five. Business suit, black derby and overcoat.

CONDUCTOR.—Regulation uniform.

MARTIN.—About fifty. Oxford gray old style "Prince Albert" suit—dark overcoat, derby.

JULIUS.—Fresh lively coon. Wears trousers and vest of old evening suit and blue and white jumper.

NOTE:—If desired, DAWSON can double KIMBALL, GILL can double COBB, and CRABB can double JULIUS. If this is done, DAWSON, GILL and CRABB should wear whiskers and wigs.

NOTE:—If desired, the parts of LUELLA ANN DAWSON and WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, JR., may be eliminated. The rearrangement of dialogue of the first act, permitting this, will be found on the following pages.

NOTE:—Rearrangement of Act I if LUELLA ANN DAWSON and WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, JR., are eliminated

DISCOVERED:—MRS. BABBIT, *middle-aged country woman in typical Sunday best, seated on the extreme edge of bench R. C. She has a hand-*

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*bag, a valise, and several bundles. Her attitude denotes extreme nervous tension. She looks at the clock.*

*At immediate rise of curtain, enter MRS. DAWSON, left door, in flat.*

MRS. BABBIT. Did you see a train coming?

MRS. DAWSON. (*Coming down to bench L., putting packages R. on bench, back*) No'm—(*Sits on bench, front*)

(*Enter BILL CRABB from door L. in flat.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising, crosses to c.*) Say, Mr. Crabb, when's the train due?

CRABB. (*Standing L. of MRS. BABBIT*) What train, think I'm a mind-reader?

MRS. BABBIT. Train for Bird-in-hand—

CRABB. (*Crossing MRS. BABBIT to R.*) Bird-in-hand—'Levin' fifty-three—

MRS. BABBIT. When's it due?

CRABB. Seven minutes afore twelve—

MRS. BABBIT. Ain't you the cute little smart Alec? That joke was old when my grandfather wuz alive!

CRABB. Your grandfather—it must be a darned old joke—

MRS. BABBIT. Just becuz the train is due at 'leven fifty-three ain't no sign it'll arrive then on your old one-horse railroad—

CRABB. (*Crossing a little to R., waving hand*) It ain't my railroad—

MRS. BABBIT. You don't say! Why, from the airs you give yourself, thought you wuz its President—

CRABB. Not yit—if I was, I wouldn't allow old women—(*MRS. BABBIT turns on him quickly*) to loaf around the depot worryin' baggage men to death—(*Exits R. I E.*)

(MRS. BABBIT *crosses to R. after CRABB. Enter WILLIAM HENRY DAWSON, carrying crock of apple-butter.*)

MRS. BABBIT. Lands' sake, that the 'leven fifty-three! (*Turning*) Oh, good-morning, Mr. Dawson, Merry Christmas——

DAWSON. Same to you, Mrs. Babbit—and many of 'em! Maw, keep an eye on this apple-butter—(*Putting jar of apple-butter on back of bench and grip on floor by bench L. Bus. of moving to c. towards MRS. BABBIT*) You know the wife, don't you?

MRS. BABBIT. I haven't had that pleasure.

(MRS. DAWSON *rises, moves to R. of bench L.*)

DAWSON. No. Wife, I thought you'd know'd Tom Babbit's widow——

MRS. BABBIT. Pleased to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Dawson.

MRS. DAWSON. Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Babbit.

DAWSON. You folks kin chin a while, I gotta rastle that trunk off that sleigh. (*Exit to baggage-room back of bench R.*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Crossing to bench L.*) Going fer?

MRS. DAWSON. Over to mother's. (*Sitting bench L.*) It's about an hour's ride. We always go over every Christmas—an' occasionally Thanksgiving Day. Since I've married, I've got to be quite a traveler. You don't go round much, do you?

MRS. BABBIT. Thank God I never was one to gad.

MRS. DAWSON. You're livin' at the Elite Hotel, I believe?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Turning to L.*) Don't know as you call it livin'—cook can't boil water without burning it.

MRS. DAWSON. Too bad you had to give up housekeepin', sacrifice your home!

MRS. BABBIT. Oh, it wasn't such a sacrifice. I'd kept boarders for twelve years. (*Moving nearer* MRS. DAWSON) Then help's such a care. Of course you wouldn't understand—you don't keep none—

MRS. DAWSON. 'Tain't that—I couldn't. If Dawson'd sell his land—

MRS. BABBIT. (*Moving to bench, L., sitting*) Ain't he got rid of that Junction property yet? He's as stubborn as Beth Elliott.

MRS. DAWSON. I'm no hand to gossip, but they do say—(*Moving close to* MRS. BABBIT, *very gossipy*) that Franklyn Royce that's down here for Martin Drury, looking after Mrs. Stratton's store since she failed, is very attentive to Beth. Wonder if that won't be a match one of these days? (*Laughs*)

MRS. BABBIT. Nothin' in it at all.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Indignantly*) You don't say!

MRS. BABBIT. Guess I'd ought to know, bein' Beth's most intimate friend—

MRS. DAWSON. She's working here at the depot, ain't she?

MRS. BABBIT. Yes, and just as smart as a steel trap. You ought to see her work that telegraph thing—wonderful technick—easy as you'd do a day's wash—

MRS. DAWSON. Really, you don't say?

(*Enter* DAWSON *and* CRABB *from baggage room*  
R. I E.)

DAWSON. Say, what about my check?

CRABB. All baggage checked fifteen minutes afore train time. (*Pointing to sign on door*) You

can spell, can't yer? It's plain as the nose on your face.

DAWSON. You leave my nose alone! (*Threatening CRABB*)

CRABB. I ain't teechin' it—(*Crossing to c., going to door L. upper*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Rising, crosses to CRABB c.*) Say, you're too fresh, you ought to be reported—

CRABB. Go on, do it, you ain't much else to do. (*Starting up to door L. in flat, then exits*)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Following CRABB*) Mind you let me know when the 'leven fifty-three arrives or I'll have you fired. (*CRABB slams door in MRS. BABBIT'S face*) Ain't he the orney little shrimp?

(*Automobile effect outside. MRS. DAWSON runs to window L.*)

DAWSON. (*Crosses to center*) That's Perce Gill in his atmobeel.

MRS. DAWSON. (*Looking out window. To MRS. BABBIT*) Which of the women is Mrs. Gill?

MRS. BABBIT. The one Mr. Gill's payin' no attention to—

MRS. DAWSON. Ain't they dressed to madness! (*To MRS. BABBIT*) What's them things on their eyes?

(*MRS. BABBIT moves toward window.*)

DAWSON. (c.) Blinders—all women had oughter wear 'em! (*Chuckles*)

MRS. BABBIT. Guess most married women'd be easier in their minds if they did. (*DAWSON moves r. Enter PERCE GILL. MRS. BABBIT turns away from window*) Is that the 'leven fifty-three? Oh, how de do, Mr. Gill! Merry Christmas!

GILL. (c.) Same to you, widder. Hello, Dawson—Merry Christmas—

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DAWSON. Same to you, Perce. (*Moves to front of bench R.*)

(MRS. DAWSON *moves to front of bench L.* MRS. BABBIT *comes down L. C.*)

GILL. Why, how de do, Mrs. Dawson? Merry Christmas!

MRS. DAWSON. How de do, Mr. Gill, Merry Christmas——

GILL. Takin' a trip, Dawson?

DAWSON. Not very far.

MRS. BABBIT. How's folks, Mr. Gill?

NOTE:—Dialogue and stage business unchanged until GILL's last entrance—followed by MRS. DAWSON who has accompanied GILL on his first exit.

(*Enter GILL with axe, which he returns to place. Enter MRS. DAWSON, comes down and sits on bench L.*)

GILL. By Gosh, Miss Beth, I clean forgot to pay the charges on them tires! How much?

BETH. A dollar ten.

GILL. Them machines does certainly burn up money—must take a spin with me some day—(*Giving money*)

BETH. I'd like to, Mr. Gill.

MRS. BABBIT. Want to kill her? Well, when you're dead and gone remember I warn'd yer.

(GILL *exits.* Whistle. Noise of train. DAWSON *enters.*)

DAWSON. Come on, Maw, bring me the bundles—the bundles—(*Exits*)

MRS. DAWSON. (*Bustling about*) I'm so ex-

cited I don't know where I'm at! I can't find my little grip! Mrs. Babbit, Mrs. Babbit, give me a hand. (*Going up to door in flat.* MRS. BABBIT *crosses to c.*) Pa—Pa—my little grip—(*Comes down L. of bench L.*)

CRABB. (*Outside—enters R. door in flat*) All aboard—all aboard—11:53—

MRS. BABBIT. Someone hold that train.

CRABB. All aboard—eleven fifty-three—(*Down by MRS. BABBIT*)

MRS. BABBIT. Don't stand there, you big lun-mix, give me a hand—

(*Exit CRABB R. door in flat.*)

MRS. DAWSON. (*Running up to door*) Paw—Paw—my little grip—I can't find my little grip—

DAWSON. (*Enters and comes down by bench c.*) What's the matter with you—what have you lost?

MRS. BABBIT. (*Picks up big grip L. of bench L., jams valise in DAWSON'S stomach*)

MRS. DAWSON. My little grip.

DAWSON. Is this the one? (*Grabbing valise*)

MRS. DAWSON. No, my little grip!

CONDUCTOR. (*Enters L. door in flat—stands L. of door*) All aboard!

MRS. BABBIT. Hold that train—it's life or death!

DAWSON. (*Drags himself across on hands and knees in front of bench L.*) Here it is—right in front of your eyes! You women can't find nothin'—

MRS. DAWSON. Of course, I'm to blame!

DAWSON. Come on here—(*Starting for door L. in flat*)

CONDUCTOR. Get a move on!

DAWSON. Don't give me none of your lip—(*Enter CRABB R. door in flat, carrying flag*)

MRS. DAWSON. That's right—pick a fuss—



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(Exit DAWSON, CONDUCTOR, and MRS. DAWSON)

MRS. BABBIT. (*Calling*) Mrs. Dawson, Mrs. Dawson—(*Getting jar of apple butter from bench L.*)

CRABB. (C.) All aboard—'leven fifty-three—three——

MRS. BABBIT. Don't bother me—(*Going to door L.*) Here's your apple butter—(CONDUCTOR, *outside, grabs jar*) Good-bye—good-bye—(*Bus. looking at clock, etc., sitting bench L.*) Say, when does that 'leven fifty-three go?

CRABB. It's jest gone——

MRS. BABBIT. What! (*Chases CRABB. CRABB waving flag at MRS. BABBIT, exits R. I E.*)

NOTE:—The rest of ACT I is unchanged.

PROPERTY PLOT.

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ACT I.

9 benches—1, 2, 3, and 4 divided by iron arms into three seats. 1 and 2 placed back to back. 3 and 4 the same, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 made to fit angles in set.

Stove—door practical, piping leading off-stage through set.

Coal scuttle with coal, poker and shovel.

Water cooler with cup.

2 gum machines, stick of gum in machine at ticket office.

1 weighing machine.

"No Smoking" sign over ticket-office.

"No loafing" sign on set near stove.

Railway map on wall over bench 8.

Express Company sign on wall over bench 9.

Money-order sign under shelf of ticket-office front.

Notice of "For Sale" right of ticket window.

2 Fire pails on shelves at upper angles of set.

Fire axe on ticket-office at up R., near water cooler.

Clock on wall over window L. 2.

Blackboard at R. side ticket-office announcing arrival of trains,—“No. 23—15 minutes late” is badly printed with chalk on it.

Time tables in rack near blackboard.

IN TICKET OFFICE

Rack for tickets R. of window; tickets.

Ticket stamp.

Express book.

Telegraph blank-book with pencil attached to it by string.

Money drawer with paper money and coins.  
 Small box wrapped up in tissue paper with blue  
 baby ribbon tied about it. (This is handed to  
 CRABB.)  
 Basket covered with napkin L. of ticket window.

# IN BASKET

Small napkin, 6 small pieces of bread, 2 slices very  
 small, some chicken sliced, one slice has wish-  
 bone attached to it. Celery, one large piece,  
 one small piece, glass, white flask with coffee in  
 it. Cork is attached to bottle by a string.  
 Small mirror at back of office.  
 Peg on wall to hang coat and hat on.  
 3 large bundles and cane telescope grip are dis-  
 covered on bench L.  
 Table off-stage L.  
 Automobile horn off L.  
 2 large bundles off-stage L. for MRS. DAWSON.  
 Small hand grip.  
 3 small packages in cord hand bag for MRS. DAWSON.  
 Old-fashioned valise off-stage for DAWSON.

# TRAIN EFFECT

Rumble cast with bell.  
 Large sheet of heavy tin.  
 Wire brush to beat on tin with.  
 Whistle.  
 Auto tire wrapped for GILL.  
 Cigarette in box for GILL.  
 Railroad signal flag for CRABB.  
 Suit-case for BLAKE.  
 Umbrella for BLAKE.  
 Cigarette case containing cigarettes for BLAKE.  
 Visiting card for BLAKE.  
 Telegraph sounder and key in ticket-office and  
 practical key and button off-stage L. of table.

ACT II.

Round poker table.

5 chairs.

Small table.

Ladies' jacket hung over chair (used by KIMBALL).

3 sample tables placed as per drawing. These are covered with sheets reaching to floor. Tables are dressed and have ladies' skirts, waists, etc.

Red skirt on table 1 near door, placed in prominent place so that it can be easily reached.

Hobble-skirt on upper end of table 3 (used by WATTS)

Two sample books at lower end of table 3.

Steam radiators.

Ladies' jacket hanging from light bracket over radiator.

Ladies' jacket hanging from electric button R. of door c.

Ladies' jacket hanging from telephone L. 3.

Hotel Rules on card on door c.

3 Flashy chromos to dress walls.

Large sample trunk opened R. 3, dressed with skirts and waists.

Blue jacket hanging on lid of trunk (used by CRABB)

Fire escape rope.

Sample trunk off-stage by door L. 3.

3 Skirts placed over trunk at L. 3.

(Props off L. 3 for KIMBALL.)

Cigars, box of poker chips; box is prepared with 5 grooves and chips are arranged so that they can be easily taken out. 10 white, 8 blue and 5 reds in back groove.

Pack of cards.

124 THE TRAVELING SALESMAN.

Box cigars for JULIUS.

Ash try for JULIUS.

Fifty-cent pieces for BLAKE, WATTS, COBB, KIMBALL.

(Off-stage by door c. on table.)

I tray with teapot and cold tea, syphon, 4 cups and napkin for JULIUS.

I tray with teapot and cold tea, 5 cups, one cup to break each performance.

I enamel ice-water jug with ice to rattle.

Sleigh-bells off-stage R.

Cheap curtains on window with roller shades.

HAND PROPS.

Cigar for BLAKE and WATTS.

Coins for BLAKE, WATTS, KIMBALL and COBB.

Pencil and envelope for BLAKE.

Red carpet covers floor of act with fancy red piece sewed on to fill space between set and flat, another piece of different pattern is also sewed on back of this to cover stage when door in flat opens.

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ACT III.

Roll-top desk, dressed with papers, pen and ink, etc.

On top of desk are placed six or seven letter-files.

Desk chair.

Couch.

Table, oblong and not too fancy.

2 chairs.

Hat rack.

Small table up-stage L. with glass and spoon on it.

Book-case with books, etc.

Speaking tube L. of door L. I.

Carpet rug.

Fashion plates in frames to dress walls.

Railway map on wall over mantel.

Mantel.

Calendar over desk with month of December.

Christmas Day must not fall on Saturday.

Window shade (roller), strong spring so that at cue  
it flies and keeps on rolling.

#### ON STAGE

Ice-water pitcher with ice and water for JULIUS.

Bottle of Bromo Seltzer for JULIUS.

Telegram in envelope for BETH ELLIOTT.

Pencil for ROYCE.

Check-book for DRURY.

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#### ACT IV.

Furniture same as ACT II.

Sample tables all stripped of suits, leaving sheets  
on.

Sample trunk closed and placed c. L. at rise.

#### OFF-STAGE c.

Tray with bottle of beer, plate, sandwich, knife and  
fork and napkin, also cork opener for JULIUS.

Small tray with visiting cards for JULIUS.

Truck for moving trunk.

Tax receipt for BLAKE.

Coins for BLAKE.

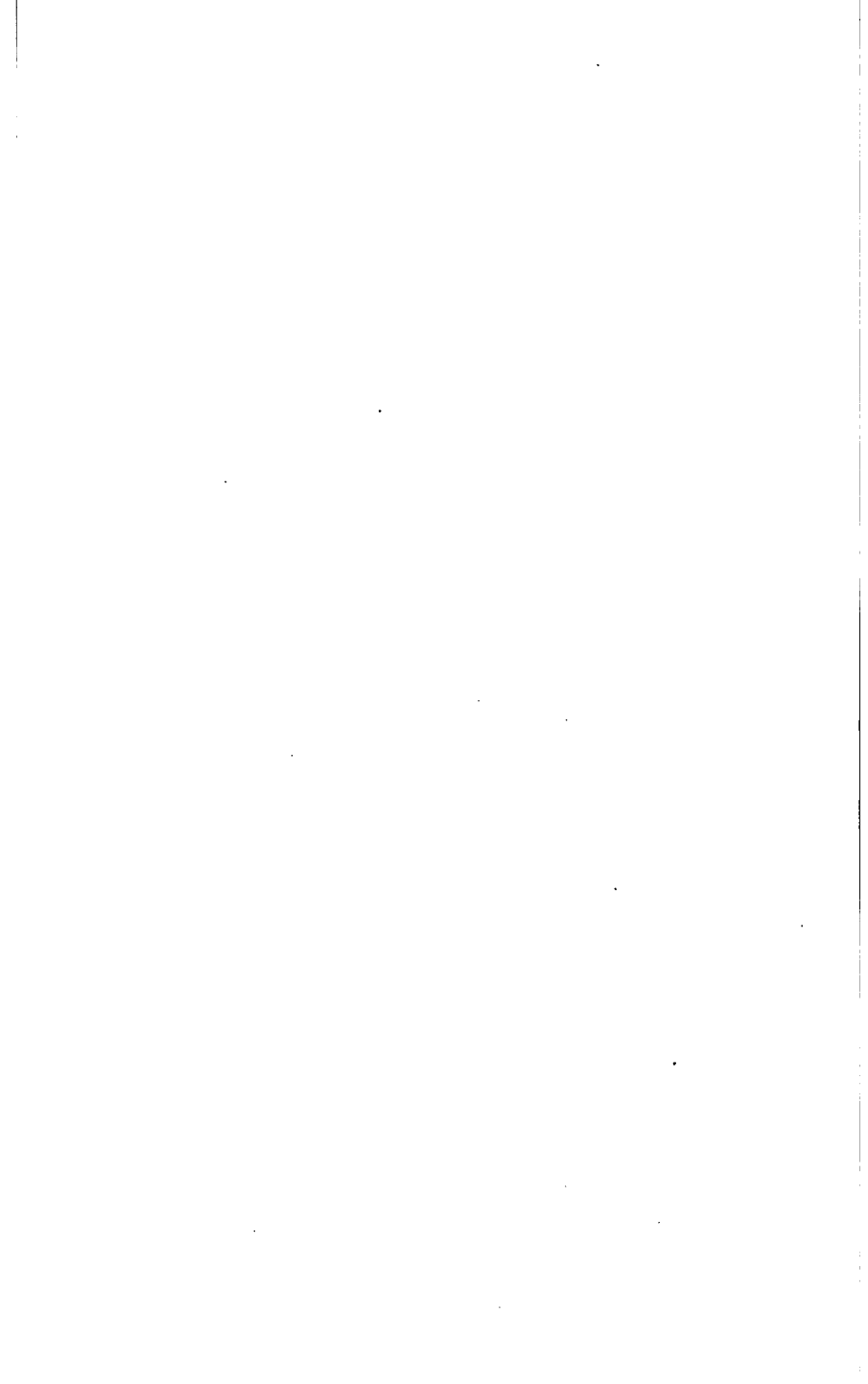
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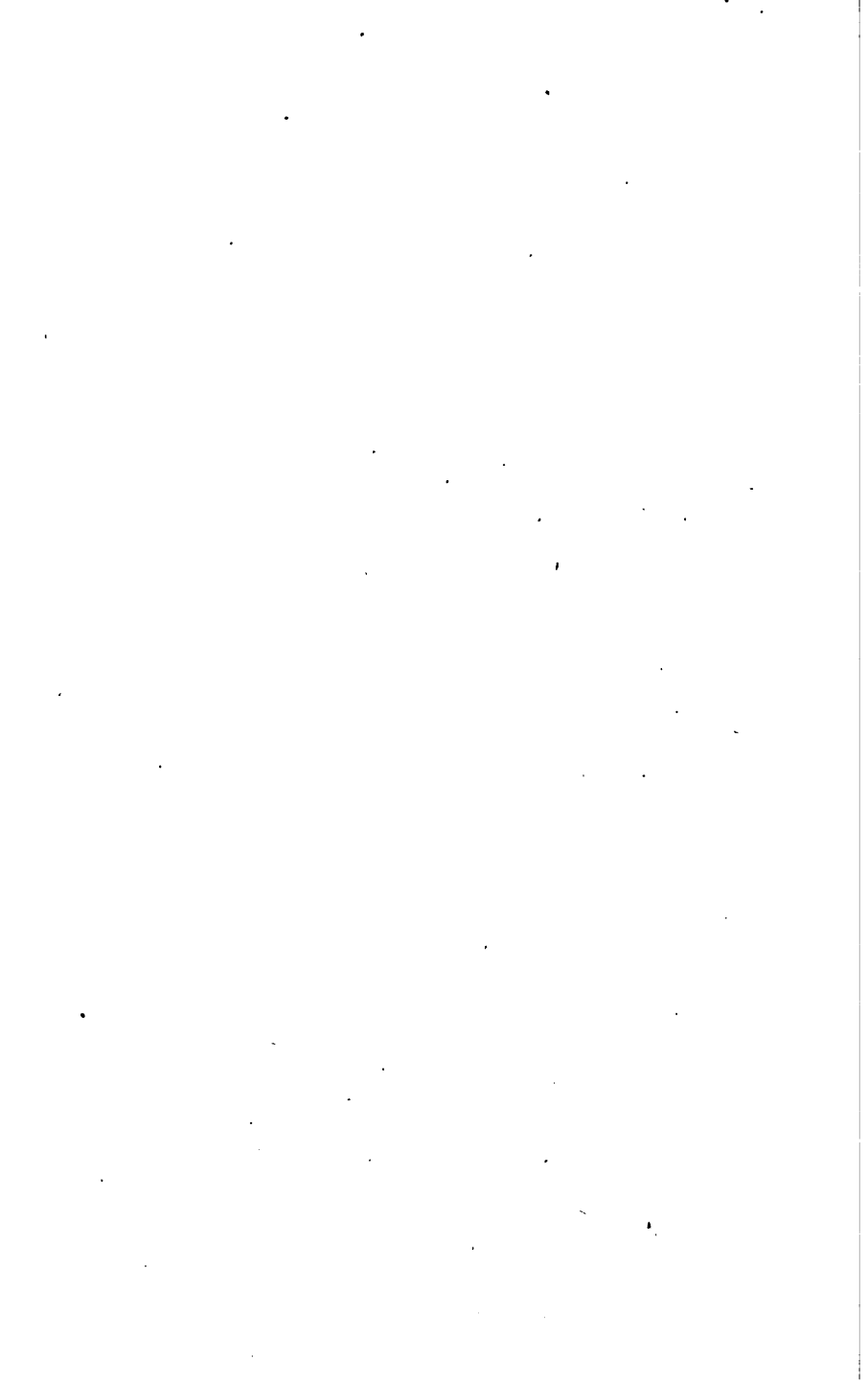












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